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COVER: RETURN OF THE FLY (1959), Ian Richardson as Sherlock Holmes (1983)
by Ted A. Bohus and Bill Chancellor

Scarlet Letters

I so enjoyed your Creature issues. (*Scarlet Streets* #46 and #47) They were beautifully laid out and the interviews were excellent—brought back memories!

Julie Adams
Los Angeles, CA

Thank you for the fine interview and the wonderful *CREATURE FROM THE BLACK LAGOON* issues. I enjoyed reading the memories of Julie [Adams] and Tom [Hennesy]. And many thanks to all the *CREATURE FROM THE BLACK LAGOON* fans for keeping the Gill Man alive all these years. *Scarlet Street* has done the Gill Man proud! Aloha!

Ben Chapman
<http://www.the-reelgillman.com>

I was 10 years old when I talked my mother into taking me to see *CREATURE FROM THE BLACK LAGOON*. I absolutely loved it, especially the crystal clear underwater sequences. It remains one of my favorite films. Congratulations on your terrific stories about this film in *Scarlet Street*, especially finding the stars to interview.

Jim Ostmann
Washington, DC

About Kate Phillips, interviewed by Leonard J. Kohl on the *Scarlet Street* Website—I first met her in a studio in Gananoque, Ontario, Canada, and studied with her there and in her home at Mallorytown, Ontario, Canada. I was taken to where she had been teaching hopeful writers. Most of the six or seven people there were interested in writing novels or screenplays. Having always written stories and lyrics since childhood, I had floated away from creativity for about 10 years. A coworker of mine at Canada Post talked me into meeting Kate. He knew I had written at one time, so either he wanted me to take it up again or it was because I had a car and he did not.

The first night I sat in Kate's loosely-structured classroom, she asked each of us to write a short story that took the protagonist back to when he/she was 17. This we all did, but she seemed most impressed with my short story. It was the only one with a horror feel to it; she was very pleased with my effort and told me she found it hard to believe that I had not written anything in a decade. She told me never to stop writing again, because I possessed a very unique gift.

A few months later, she asked if I could write a Christmas story, which she would read (knowing how I hated to read in public) on CKWS TV in Kingston, Ontario. I arrived at the TV studio the next day armed with two stories. I gave them to her to review and she chose the one she thought best. And then she told me it was my turn to go into the taping studio to read the story she picked!

To this day, I've written one novel, which has been edited by Nancy Kilpatrick and is being polished so it can find a publisher. I am writing another based on the Christmas short story I read on CKWS. When I read *Scarlet Street*'s interview, I recalled that one person who single-handedly convinced me I was worthy enough to be a writer. I thank you, Kate Phillips, and wish you the best.

Douglas E. Wright
Renfrew, Ontario

In its review of Richard Barrio's book *Screened Out* (*Scarlet Street* #41), *Scarlet Street* has finally discovered actor Richard Cromwell, who is considered an obscure actor by most people today, but who actually had a substantial screen career in the thirties. He burst on the movie scene in the remake of *TOL'ABLE DAVID* in 1930. He had absolutely no acting experience. By 1932, he was playing opposite Marie Dressler in *EMMA* and Tom Brown in *TOM BROWN OF CULVER*. In 1934, he starred opposite Gary Cooper and Franchot Tone in his most famous film, as Lieutenant David Stone in Henry Hathaway's *LIVES OF A BENGAL LANCER*. And, then, it was simply onward and upward—in 1936, he played opposite W.C. Fields in *POPPY*; in 1938, he played opposite Bette Davis and Henry Fonda in *JEZEBEL* and, in 1939, had another memorable role opposite Henry Fonda in *YOUNG MR. LINCOLN*. In 1942, his screen career was interrupted by World War II service in the Coast Guard. On his return to Hollywood, he was never able to regain his footing. He made only one more film—1948's *BUNGALOW 13*.

With his screen career in shambles, his financial situation bleak, and his alcoholic bent becoming obvious, Richard Crom-



well attempted to change his not-so-secret homosexuality and inhabit the boy-next-door image of his screen career. He began to court a young English actress by the name of Angela Lansbury, who had made quite a splash with *GASLIGHT* and *THE PICTURE OF DORIAN GRAY*. They actually married three weeks before Angela Lansbury's 20th birthday (Cromwell was 15 years older) in September, 1945. After only 11 months, Cromwell cracked under the strain of sexual pretense and abandoned both his new wife and their home. Lansbury found a note from her husband on the Steinway Grand piano that he had given her as a wedding present. It said, simply, "I'm sorry darling, I just can't go on."

Before his death 14 years later from cancer at the age of 50, Richard Cromwell had become friends again with Angela Lansbury—and with her second husband, Peter Shaw.

Raymond Banacki
Brooklyn, NY

Hey, there! Just wanted to tell you I'm a major fan of *Scarlet Street*! It's written in a very reader-friendly way, unlike most mags, which tend to be more rigid and neutral in their writing.

And lo and behold, when I picked up your latest issue (SS #47), on page 38, there was the money shot of one of my favorite guilty pleasures, *THE MONSTER OF PIEDRAS BLANCAS*. I've been hunting down that shot of the creature holding a guy's severed head for years. I remember first seeing it in some horror zine years ago and being too stupid to buy it that second. Any info on how and where I can snag this gem in all its glory will be immensely welcome! Thanks for reviving hope in my mission. And keep up the great work! Jersey rocks!

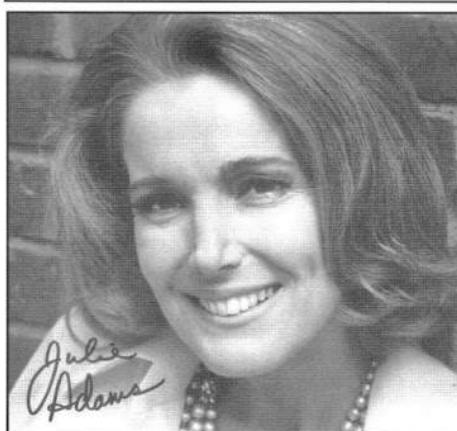
Josh Ortega
coffeecreep_2000@yahoo.com

A good bet is to contact our good friend, Stephen Sally. You'll find his advertisement in this very issue, on page 30.

What a devilishly delicious surprise! . . . to see my drawing of the Witch and her poisoned apple featured with the article, *DISNEY'S UNBURIED TREASURES* by Richard Valley, Ross Care, and Barry Monush. (*Scarlet Street* #47)

My first assignment for the character merchandising division at Disney was to

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Julie Adams

Continued on page 10

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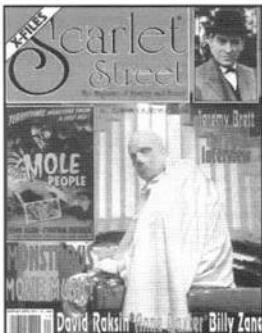
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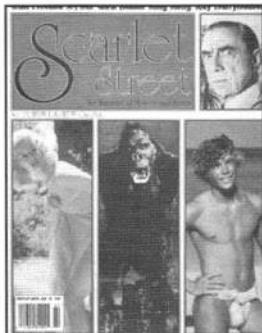
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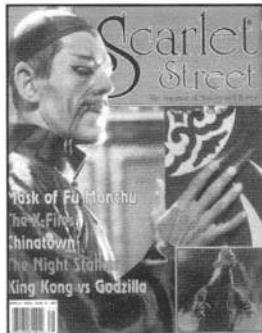
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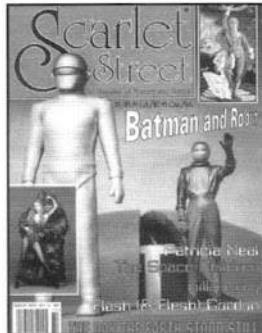
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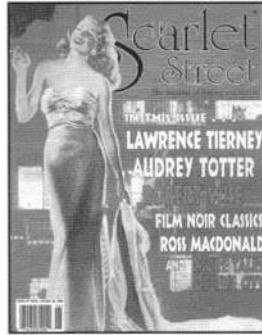
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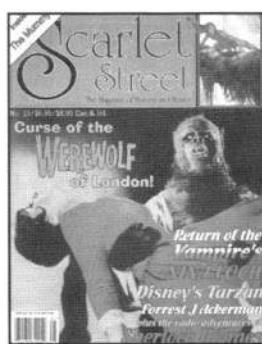
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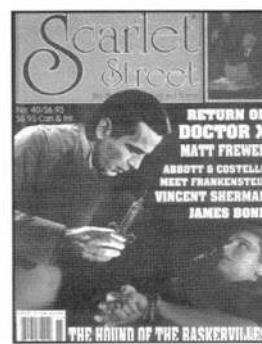
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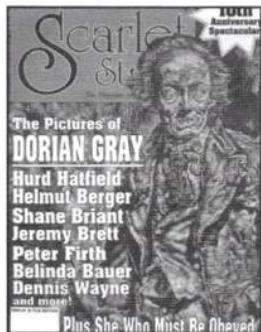
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#41: Hurd Hatfield, Helmut Berger, Curt Siodmak, THE PICTURE OF DORIAN GRAY, Horror Italian Style; Mario Bava on DVD, BEACH PARTY, THE BEAST WITH FIVE FINGERS, Empire of the Imagination: She Who Must Be Obeyed, Forry Ackerman, and more!



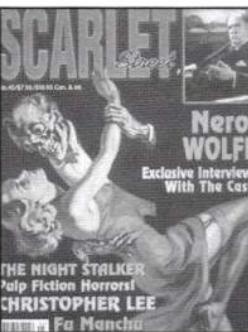
#42: Shane Briant, THE PICTURE OF DORIAN GRAY, Ursula Andress, SHE, Curtis Harrington, FRANKENSTEIN AND ME's Robert Tinnell, Crosby, Hope, and Lassiter: The Road Pictures, Elizabeth Shepherd, David Peel as Dorian Gray, USHER, Zacherley, and more!



#43: THE BLACK ROOM, NIGHT OF TERROR, THE PICTURE OF DORIAN GRAY, SHE, Dick Smith's Dorian Gray makeup, Universal Horrors on DVD, Marilyn Monroe Diamond Collection, Erotic Thrillers, THE MENACE, Columbia Horrors, THE BOOGYEMAN, and more!



#44: Christopher Lee, Harry Alan Towers, THE FACE OF FUMANCHO, SHE, Lurking Upon the Rooftops: Fantomas, Gunfight at the DVD Corral, Record Rack, HORATIO HORNBLOWER, Sinatra's Rat Pack, Don Dohler, The Many Faces of Christopher Lee, and more!



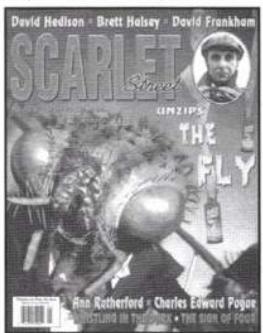
#45: NERO WOLFE, Christopher Lee, Maury Chaykin, Harry Alan Towers, Pulp Fiction, Tim Hutton, THE BRIDES OF FU MANCHU, Bruce Kimmel, THE FIRST NUDE MUSICAL, THE ADVENTURES OF ELLERY QUEEN, Dr. Mabuse on DVD, The Night Stalker comic, and more!



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#48: David Hedison, Brett Halsey, David Frankham, THE FLY, Ann Rutherford, Charles Edward Pogue, WHISTLING IN THE DARK, Ricou Browning, Tom Hennessy, Forry Ackerman, The Comic Book Creature, Musicals on DVD, Television Detectives, and more!

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SCARLET LETTERS

Continued from page 4

recreate the villains for a new product series. This work, "Witch Offering Apple," inspired by SNOW WHITE AND THE SEVEN DWARFS, is pictured on the opening page in the book, *The Disney Villain*. The challenge was for me to show, in a single drawing, the complete story of the character's personality. In film animation, the artist breathes life into the character through a sequence of drawings. Either



Mark Mitchell, Ollie Johnston, Mickey Mouse, and Frank Thomas at the Museum of Cartoon Art in 1986.

way, this is not easy to achieve. Once again, I've been sprinkled with pixie dust . . . for it is the only illustration to be shown twice in the book as the epitome of a Disney villain. I have been indeed blessed to be acknowledged for this accomplishment by the authors, my ol' buddies and master animators: Ollie

Johnston and Frank Thomas, two of the renowned "Nine Old Men" who worked directly with Walt Disney in creating most of the beloved animated features.

Perhaps in an upcoming issue, I would be delighted to share with your readers some of the unproduced concept art that did not appear in the final edition. With every good wish and a few evil ones . . .

Mark Mitchell
Stoneham, MA

We had no idea, when we chose the lead illustration for our Disney article, that the work was by our good friend Mark Mitchell. We'd like nothing better than to have him visit Scarlet Street in a future issue.

I received *Scarlet Street* #47 yesterday here in Virginia and have enjoyed reading about the Columbia Studios horror films. I was really glad to see the coverage of THE FACE BEHIND THE MASK, which prompted me to rewatch the film again on an old VCR tape. I agree with Ken Hanke that Peter Lorre did a fantastic job portraying Janos. His mask not only changed his face, but made him a rather flashy dresser as well!

I really knew that I was watching a Columbia film when I noticed John Tyrrell in the cast as one of Lorre's gang members. Tyrrell was memorable in many Three Stooges films as the big, dumb mobster or palace guard or policeman or whatever Stooge adversary was called for in the script.

Loved the cover! Is that a Knox Gelatine scar on Lorre? I learned that trick

from Dick Smith's famous *Monster Makeup Book* back in the sixties. The thing that I remember most about the gelatine scar was the horrible smell. Ah, sweet memories of childhood!

Mark Daughtrey
Lexington, VA

I've only been an occasional reader of *Scarlet Street*, but—wow!—you've now made me buy two issues in a row! I am a big fan of fifties B films and I must say that you have certainly made a big impression on this film fan. The interviews with Lori Nelson, Brett Halsey, Julie Adams, and John Bromfield in SS #46 were great! (My only complaint is that I wish the John Bromfield interview could have been more in-depth, covering more of his film work in the fifties.) All four performers are particular favorites of mine, and I was thrilled to have them all in these two issues!

The last issue that I recall buying was when you had a most wonderful article on TEENAGERS FROM OUTER SPACE. I loved hearing about the making of that film and the personalities involved. I always had the impression that *Scarlet Street* was more focused on classic horror and *film noir*, and less on fifties sci-fi or other genre B films of that era, but I see that you're actually all inclusive—in a good (make that great) way! I can only hope that it will continue. I will definitely be keeping a look out for your magazine on a regular basis, and maybe someday I will see more interviews of the lesser-

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known B players of the fifties—and the thirties, forties, and even sixties. I hate to think what I have already missed!

Ken Karel
Los Angeles, CA

You don't have to miss anything, Ken; you can always stock up on back issues. And a subscription will keep you from missing anything in the future, where most of us will be spending the rest of our lives

Finding *Scarlet Street* has been an pretty important experience for me. The magazine displays interest in a dazzling variety of subjects. And the writing is always impressive. Until I found *SS*, I thought I was the only one who would want to read about Columbia Horrors, Disney DVDs, film noir, science fiction, Evelyn Keyes, or any other combination of seemingly incongruous topics. It turns out they are not incongruous, this is the stuff that's interesting and you guys do an ace job researching and presenting it. An article like *COLUMBIA HORRORS* does just what it should do: it makes you want to see the films again—or, in my case, see them for the first time (like *THE DEVIL COMMANDS*). And reading all those anecdotes of Ann Rutherford and Evelyn Keyes, related as if they just happened, in clear prose—that's the stuff of which film fans dream!

Jay MacIntyre
Boston, MA

We've got Richard Valley's FRANKLY SCARLET column in *SS* #47 for one of the

most enjoyable evenings I've ever spent in this wonderful city. My wife and I dropped in at the Don't Tell Mama club on Mr. Valley's advice and spent hours being entertained by the wonderful singers and pianist. We'll be going back and hope to meet Mr. Valley and *SS* managing editor Tom Amorosi some night.

Kevin Burnett
New York, NY

Started off this weekend by reading the new installment of Ken Hanke's *COLUMBIA HORRORS*. Excellent coverage of the Karloff and Lorre films with insights, analysis, and fine attention to detail, actually quoting some of Boris' most memorable speeches. Connecting the recurring actors, especially Stanley Brown, added to the fun. The background artwork was terrific, adding dimension to the piece which made it great to look at—in addition to being a great read.

Continued with a read of Harry Long's look into *THE CREATURE'S GENE POOL*. Swell coverage of the various Gill Man knockoffs and pointing out the films' strengths and weaknesses made this a great tie-in to the recent run of entertaining and informative *Creature* features and interviews. I think some of the music in *DESTINATION INNER SPACE* came from the composer's work for *ANGRY RED PLANET*. Speaking of recycling, Larry Buchanan certainly did a lot of it. Not only of better movies from the fifties, but of his own monsters. The monster from *CREATURE OF DESTRUCTION*

showed up in Buchanan's boring *IT'S ALIVE* in 1968. I forgot about *BLOOD WATERS OF DR. Z* (and I'm not sure we should thank you, Harry, for reminding us), but for the sake of complete coverage, I suppose it had to be mentioned.

Another one that might merit inclusion would be *THE LORELEI'S GRASP* from the mid-seventies. Lorelei is a beautiful immortal by day who changes to a hideous aquatic monster by the light of the full moon to eat the hearts of victims (preceded by the graphic onscreen removal of same). The film ventures into H. Rider Haggard SHE territory when the Lorelei wants to immortalize the first man who actually makes love to her (in human form, of course). She doesn't have as many minions as Ayesha, though—just one guy and three gals. The ladies fight over the hero, who looks a bit like an Elvis impersonator.

Joe Winter
Richmond, IN

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Yes, kids, it's the *Scarlet Street* Slightly Mangled Special. We have in our vaults some issues with minor defects: price tags glued on the covers, a folded page, a gypsy curse scrawled on the classifieds . . . nothing too grim, but enough to render them unsuitable for sale at the usual rate.

So, gang . . . now's your chance to get the *Scarlet Street* you've been missing! Just fill out the handy dandy coupon and we'll send you copies that, in the words of Ygor, are "broken, crippled, and distorted"—just a teensy bit.

Saints preserve us! Mother Superior is simply bubbling over with joy and excitement at the prospect of getting back issues of *Scarlet Street* at a heavenly low price . . . !

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For issue contents, see pages 7, 8, and 9.

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*Frankly
Scarlet*

I thought the idea was a simple one. Scarlet Street managing editor Tom Amorosi, on the other hand, thought it was more simpleminded than simple, but I stuck to my guns like—well, like a fly to a pest strip, and thereby hangs the tale of the cover for the very issue you now hold in your eager little hands.

When I was a kid back in the Middle Ages, otherwise known as the 1950s, those sickly-looking, yellowish pest strips—or fly strips, as some of us called them—were everywhere. Sit yourself down in a diner for a burger and coke and there they were above you, dangling from the ceiling and covered with dead flies. Grocery stores had them. Sweet shops had them. And hardware stores—where they were usually sold—had them coming out of their ears. They were a part of fifties life and, like bomb shelters and air raid warnings and President Eisenhower, not much attention was paid to them. They were there; they did their job: flies didn't stand a chance.

So when we commenced putting together *Scarlet Street* #48 and its mad abundance of articles and interviews covering the five famous Fly flicks—*THE FLY* (1958), *RETURN OF THE FLY* (1959), *CURSE OF THE FLY* (1965), *THE FLY* (1986), and *THE FLY II* (1989)—I thought it might be fun to put one of the Human/Flies on the cover, surrounded by pest strips on which his diminutive pals were stuck for life. Trouble was, Tom had never seen a pest strip in his life, and hardly anyone else connected with the mag remembered them.



When they did remember them, vaguely, they thought pest strips were similar to roach motels, with the flies checking in and, like tiny Marion Cranes, never checking out.

Stubbornly, I took my case to the People—the People in this particular case being the madcap members of the Scarlet Street Message Boards. "Whatever happened to pest strips?" I politely queried. "When I was a kid, you used to see them hanging in country stores and diners, in people's basements, everywhere. Haven't seen a pest strip in decades. Do they still exist?"

Don Mankowski replied: "Pest strips were important in college and university biology labs devoted to genetics research. We used *Drosophila*, the fruit fly, a whole lot. When you conducted breeding experiments, your virgin females had to be less than 12 hours old, and you couldn't have any renegade male flies flitting about your lab."

Virgin females? In college? Obviously, Mr. Mankowski was letting his imagination run riot. I looked elsewhere for reliable information.

The ever-helpful Leonard J. Kohl responded with, "Can you imagine Rich hanging from a No Pest Strip? I can! Remember that weird TWILIGHT ZONE episode where the couple wake up from a wild party and discover they are on another planet and in some kid's doll house? Well, imagine Rich on a giant No Pest Strip, yelling, 'Help me! Help me!'"

Funny fellow, Mr. Kohl. I sometimes wonder what happened to him. At other times, of course, I don't.

Finally, blessedly, Scarlet Scribe Ron Morgan opined: "As far as the pest strips go, Richard, if you're talking about the ones where you pull the tube down to stretch out the long sticky tape, we used 'em just this past summer in the restaurant where I work. (They were hung well away from any food preparation areas, though.)"



So, like Scott Carey in THE INCREDIBLE SHRINKING MAN (1957), pest strips still existed. They were out there, alone, barely remembered, waiting to do a Norma Desmond on the cover of Scarlet Street. Off I went in search of the tacky little devils, and easily enough—in a hardware store, natch—I found them. That was Step One. Step Two was to cart them over to associate editor Ted A. Bohus' house to photograph them. Step Three was to remove Ted from one of the strips. Step Four was to remove me from one of the strips. (I hasten to point out that neither of us cried, "Help me! Help me!" Well, okay, maybe I did.)



Mission accomplished, the digital images (that's one of 'em pictured at the Bottom Left of this page) were quickly sent to SS cover artist Bill Chancellor, who combined them with the image of RETURN OF THE FLY's titular monstrosity. (I decided the big-headed Fly featured in RETURN would show up a lot better than the smaller-noggined critter of the first film). Finally, Bill added the requisite winged wonders to the strips and renamed the product Scarlet Street Fly Strips. The finished art, sans lettering, is pictured here in all its gooey glory.

And thus, Scarlet Streeters, we welcome you to the opening of THE FLY! Herein you'll find a thought-provoking investigation into the tragic history of the Delambre and Brundie families, and exclusive interviews with Fly Guys David Hedison, Brett Halsey, David Frankham, and Charles Edward Pogue. You'll find the conclusion of our CREATURE FROM THE BLACK LAGOON coverage and the second and final installment of our fascinating interview with Ann Rutherford. You'll find . . .

Oh, heck, you don't need me to tell you what you'll find; you're smart enough to find it yourselves. You're our Faithful Readership, after all, and—like a Delambre on a pest strip—we're stuck on you!

Richard
Valley

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Now Slaying

A fantastic phalanx of fictional characters comprises THE LEAGUE OF EXTRAORDINARY GENTLEMEN, heading our way in July from 20th Century Fox. In this adaptation of the graphic novel by Alan Moore (*From Hell*), a unique army of adventurers is enlisted by Her Majesty Queen Victoria's Secret Service to battle a mysterious villain bent on world destruction. Sean Connery stars as novelist H. Rider Haggard's heroic hunter Allan Quatermain; his compatriots include Dracula damsels Mina Harker (Peta Wilson), Dorian Gray (Stuart Townsend), Dr. Henry Jekyll (Jason Flemyng), and American agent Tom Sawyer (Shane West). Rumor has it the villain of the piece has a Sherlockian pedigree . . .

Also in July, Arnold Schwarzenegger once again flexes his franchised metal biceps in TERMINATOR 3: RISE OF THE MACHINES (Warner Bros.) . . . Get shagged, Austin Powers—JOHNNY ENGLISH (Universal) is gunning for your spy-spoof turf. The great Rowan Atkinson portrays the title Bondian buffoon with an assist from John Malkovich and singer/actress Natalie Imbruglia . . . The DreamWorks animated adventure SINBAD: LEGEND OF THE SEVEN SEAS (Columbia) features the voices of Brad Pitt, Michelle Pfeiffer, and Catherine Zeta-Jones . . . Disney's PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN: THE CURSE OF THE BLACK PEARL stars a swashbuckling Johnny Depp and Geoffrey Rush . . . Angelina Jolie's Amazonian adventurer returns in LARA CROFT TOMB RAIDER: THE CRADLE OF LIFE (Paramount).

At press time, the demonic Warner Bros. prequel EXORCIST: THE BEGINNING was pulled from its planned July release date. Watch for it to possess theaters late this year or early next.

Future Features

THE CORPSE BRIDE, producer Tim Burton's first return to stop-motion animation since JAMES AND THE GIANT PEACH (1996), is filming in the U.K. under the direction of Mike Johnson, animator alumnus from PEACH and THE NIGHTMARE BEFORE CHRISTMAS. It's sort of a TALES FROM THE CRYPT meets FIDDLER ON THE ROOF story, reportedly based on a 19th-century Russian folk tale about a man who accidentally becomes engaged to a corpse.

Director Joel Schumacher is in preproduction on Warner Bros.'s resuscitated

big-screen version of Andrew Lloyd Webber's PHANTOM OF THE OPERA.

A screen adaptation of *Riding the Bullet*, Stephen King's 2000 Internet novella, is due to start production this year from veteran King collaborator Mick Garris (THE STAND). The tale concerns a teen who hitchhikes across Maine (where else?) and is picked up by a ghostly traveler. Garris is currently at work on a miniseries of King's *Desperation* to air next year on ABC. Meanwhile, King's 1991 novella *Secret Window, Secret Garden* is set for filming this summer, with Johnny Depp starring in an adaptation by writer-director David Koepp.



Basil Rathbone (pictured with Ida Lupino in 1939's classic ADVENTURES OF SHERLOCK HOLMES) is finally set to make his long-awaited DVD debut as the Great Detective.

FAR FROM HEAVEN star Julianne Moore headlines Columbia's thriller THE FORGOTTEN, set to shoot later this year under the direction of Joseph Rubin. Moore portrays a woman mourning the death of her young son, who is subsequently told by her psychiatrist that the boy was a figment of her imagination. Gerald DiPego scripted.

ALL MY CHILDREN hunk Dylan Fergus stars in what is being touted as the "first all-gay horror film" from producer Steven J. Wolfe, who's taken a fun stab at the slasher genre and populated it with gay characters. Wolfe's recent productions include the film festival prize-winners TOLLBOOTH and TWIN FALLS IDAHO; his B-movie beginnings include Crown International's MY MOM'S A WEREWOLF in 1989, which featured a cameo by *Scarlet Street*'s very own Forrest J Ackerman.

Déjà Views

Director Peter Jackson, master of Middle Earth as a result of his epic LORD OF THE RINGS trilogy, becomes master of mega-monkeys with his next project—a lavish remake of KING KONG for Universal. Jackson began preproduction seven years ago on his new version of the 1933 Edgar Wallace/Merian C. Cooper tale, but was blissfully sidetracked by Bilbo Baggins and company. Jackson's new KONG, set in the 1930s to match its source material (unlike a certain unfortunate 1976 production), is to be produced in the director's New Zealand stomping grounds for a planned 2005 theatrical release.

From the lauded lips of Agent Dana Scully comes news of a new X-FILES feature. In a recent televised interview, Gillian Anderson reported that producer Chris Carter is developing a second FILES film to begin production at 20th Century Fox by year's end. Anderson and David Duchovny have signed to reprise their roles, and latecomer agents Robert Patrick and Annabeth Gish are due to join the investigation.

THE AMAZING SPIDER-MAN slings his web in a new big-screen feature, now in production from Columbia for a July 2004 release. Toby Maguire returns as the webbed wonder, with the villainous Dr. Octopus—Doc Ock to his pals—being played by Alfred Molina. Also returning are Kirsten Dunst, James Franco, and J.K. Simmons. Other Marvel superhero sequels in development include BLADE III starring Wesley Snipes, DAREDEVIL 2, and a possible ELEKTRA spin-off.

Brandon Lee may have passed away, but THE CROW franchise flies on. A fourth theatrical entry, titled THE CROW: WICKED PRAYER is in preproduction at Dimension, cowritten by series vet Jeff Most. Edward Furlong portrays the latest ill-fated gent to assume the feathery mantle; Tara Reid and ANGEL star David Boreanaz are on hand as well.

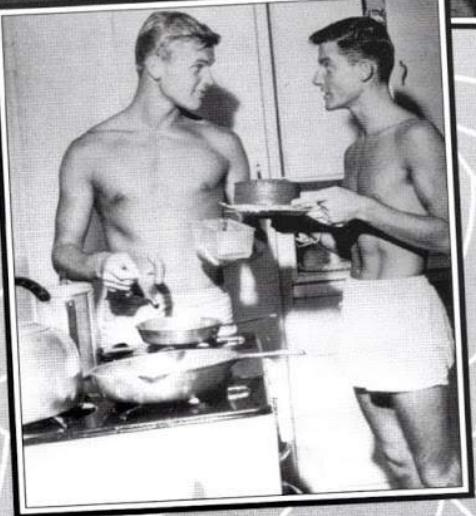
Other sequels on Hollywood's development slate include MIMIC: SENTINEL, RESIDENT EVIL 2, STARSHIP TROOPERS 2, SCOOBY-DOO 2: MONSTERS UNLEASHED, SHREK 2, THE RUNNING MAN 2, X-MEN 3, FINAL DESTINATION 3, SPY KIDS 3D, SCARY MOVIE 4, AUSTIN POWERS 4, and, of course, STAR WARS EPISODE 3, due in May 2005.

On the copycat track: THE STEPFORD WIVES starring Nicole Kidman, Denzel Washington in THE MANCHURIAN CANDIDATE, Steven Spielberg's THE SECRET LIFE OF WALTER MITTY with Jim Carrey, Jackie Chan in AROUND

Continued on page 18



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It's Delovely! Musicals on DVD

by Anthony Dale and Richard Valley

America's love affair with its very own original art form, the American musical film, might be traced back to a frosty February day in 1929 when MGM's *THE BROADWAY MELODY* hit cinema screens. The movie, featuring Bessie Love and Anita Page, also began a tradition of musicals garnering golden statuettes (known as Oscars) for Best Picture—a tradition that's not entirely vanished, as the remarkable film version of *CHICAGO* demonstrated this year with its 13 Academy Award nominations and six wins, including Best Picture. *CHICAGO* doesn't reach DVD until August 2003, but, undoubtedly due to its overwhelming success, a myriad of musical DVDs have been released recently, which should tide one over until the film from the Windy City blows into town.

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lar dancers, Eleanor Powell, Astaire is debonair against brilliant black-and-white Art Deco sets, leading his leading lady through sleek steps on a black-mirrored floor to the strains of Cole Porter's standard, "Begin the Beguine." Basically a backstage saga, a peg on which to hang five production numbers, *BROADWAY MELODY* OF 1940 finds Johnny Brent (Astaire) saving "the big show" at the last minute by subbing for the intoxicated King Shaw (George Murphy). It's a hooper's delight, with marvelous music from Porter, including "I Concentrate on You." With near-perfect picture quality, the DVD also includes the first of the COLE PORTER IN HOLLYWOOD featurettes (one appears with each of the MGM musicals), this one subtitled BEGIN THE BEGUINE and hosted by tapper Ann Miller.

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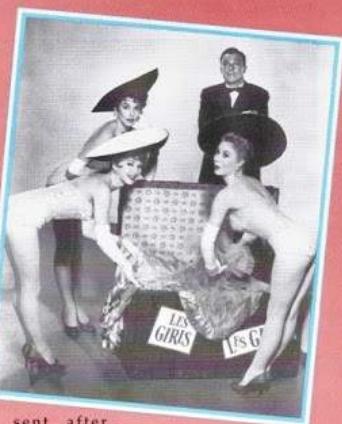
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Although filmed in Anso Color (an on-the-cheap alternative to Technicolor), *KISS ME, KATE* comes to DVD in a bold, vibrant full-frame transfer and a newly remixed Dolby Digital soundtrack, which can be also accessed as a "music only track." Miller hosts the mini-documentary (TOO DARN HOT), which features new interviews with Keel, Grayson, and Rall. Of special interest is the short, *MIGHTY MANHATTAN*, NEW YORK'S WONDER CITY, a 20-minute Technicolor travelogue showcasing The Big Apple circa 1953.

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"When I reached the charming age of puberty" becomes "When first aware of masculinity" ("Where is the Life that Late I Led?") and "According to The Kinsey Report" becomes "According to the latest report" ("Too Darn Hot")—but Porter's finest, geographically impossible joke remains: "Gazing down on the Jungfrau . . ." ("Wunderbar"). Charting the antics of a theater troupe mounting a musical version of Shakespeare's *THE TAMING OF THE SHREW*, *KATE* is one of MGM's finest jewels. Howard Keel positively drips sinewy masculinity as the hammy Fred Graham and the onstage Petruchio. Matching him note for note and joke for joke, Kathryn Grayson has the role of her lifetime as Graham's ex-wife, still "So In Love" with him, but green-eyed with envy over his romantic peccadillos. Other characters include gold-digging chorine Lois Lane (Miller), who titillatingly taps her way through "Too Darn Hot;" a couple of this-gun-for-hire thugs (Keenan Wynn and James Whitmore), who delightfully learn how to "Brush Up Your Shakespeare;" and a trio of dancers (Bobby Van, Tommy Rall, and Bob Fosse) competing onstage for Lois'

affections. The film's interpolated number, "From This Moment On" (written for Porter's Broadway flop *OUT OF THIS WORLD*, but dropped out of town!) gives each dancer a chance to shine, though it is Fosse's sultry pas-de-deux with Carol Haney that leaves the greatest impression.

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The Big Apple should have received costar billing in MGM Home Entertainment's bountiful, two-disc Special Edition of 1961's *WEST SIDE STORY* (\$39.98). The use of the city's streets of New York in the opening sequence fashioned by codirectors Robert Wise and Jerome Robbins adds gritty realism to this rival-gangs retelling of Shakespeare's (him again?) *ROMEO AND JULIET*. The fresh-faced, uber-masculine dancers strutting their stuff around the future site of Lincoln Center establishes the film's tone. MGM went the extra mile with this edition, remastering the brassy soundtrack in Dolby Digital 5.1 surround sound, and including a retrospective documentary featuring nearly every surviving lead (George Chakiris is conspicuously absent), trailers, and a book including Ernest Lehman's screenplay, behind-the-scenes photos, and a reproduction of the theatrical souvenir program.

Meanwhile, in Gay Paree, both Fred Astaire and Gene Kelly concluded spectacular runs in MGM musicals with two Cole Porter musicals set in the City of Lights. Astaire starred in 1957's *SILK STOCKINGS* (Warner Home Video, \$19.98), a sparkling adaptation of the Broadway show based on the 1939 film *NINOTCHKA*. The screen's most elegant hoofer plays movie producer Steve Canfield, who has signed Russian composer Peter Illyitch Boroff (Wim Sonneveld) to write the score for an upcoming "serious film" starring the screen's soggy queen of underwater musicals, Peggy Dayton (Janis Paige, in a show-stopping turn). Three Russian agents (Jules Munshin, Joseph Buloff, and, of all people, Peter Lorre) are sent to Paris to put a stop to the Hollywood shenanigans, but they fall prey to the charms of the city and *les girls*. Envoy extraordinaire Nina "Ninotchka" Yoshenko (Cyd Charisse, as if any Russian agent ever had legs like that) is, in turn,

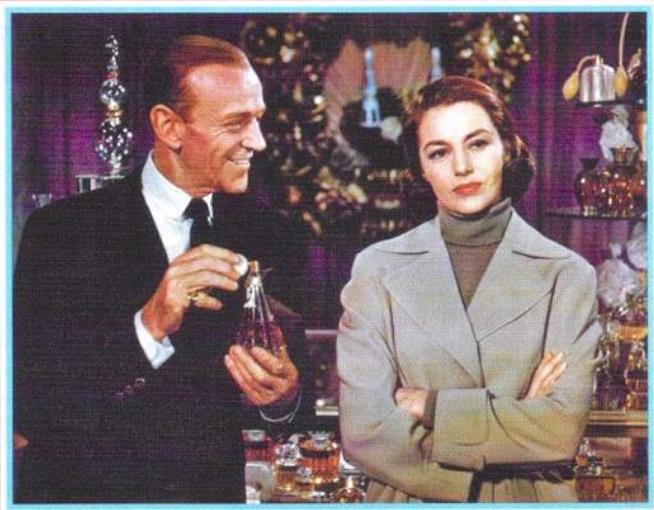


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NEWS HOUND

Continued from page 14

THE WORLD IN 80 DAYS, a George Romero-less DAWN OF THE DEAD, SUSPIRIA from Dimension, CHARLIE CHAN starring Lucy Liu, and an MTV production of WUTHERING HEIGHTS. Aren't you glad you didn't ask?

Small Screen News

Here's a rundown from The Hound on some TV pilots announced by the networks, some of which may become fall 2003 series....

The WB hopes to turn TARZAN loose on the urban jungle, with Calvin Klein model Travis Fimmel portraying a dapper Ape Man brought to civilization (New York City, that is) by an uncle played by Mitch Pileggi and by producer Davis Nutter—both X-FILES veterans. Some other X-FILES alums—producers Dan Angel and Billy Brown—are teaming up with coproducer Mel Gibson on a WB pilot called FAMILY CURSE, about a family of archeologists who search for mythic creatures. Still more from THE X-FILES ranks: actor Robert Patrick and producer R.W. Goodwin are teaming on a pilot for the FX channel called SNITCH, about a con man recruited as an operative for the Feds. SCREAM man Wes Craven is producing a tryout for UPN entitled KAMELOT, a futuristic take on the King Arthur legend. Sexy star Theresa Russell plays a Scotland Yard detective who comes Stateside to track down her sister in CHASING ALICE, an Alice in Wonderland-flavored drama pilot for the WB. And USA Network is mounting a

pilot for TOUCHING EVIL, a Yank version of the British detective series to be produced by Allen and Albert Hughes, directors of the 2001 feature FROM HELL.

Miniseries Mayhem

Stephen King's 1975 novel *Salem's Lot* is again headed for the small screen, this time as a four-hour miniseries on the TNT channel. Rob Lowe stars as journalist Ben Mears (portrayed by David Soul in Tobe Hooper's fine 1979 two-parter), who finds his old home town plagued by an unpleasant vampire infestation. Donald Sutherland plays Straker, envoy of the undead—the role taken by James Mason in the original. Veteran cinematographer Mikael Salomon directs the long-form project, which costars James Cromwell, Andre Braugher, Samantha Mathis, and Rutger Hauer as the main bloodsucker.

Clive Barker's 1995 novel *Lord of Illusions*, which became a big-screen feature in 1995, is tentatively set for miniseries treatment on Showtime... Sci-Fi Channel has a four-hour miniseries version of THE THING in development, based *Who Goes There*, the John W. Campbell story that inspired two theatrical features.

Sunnydale Sayonara

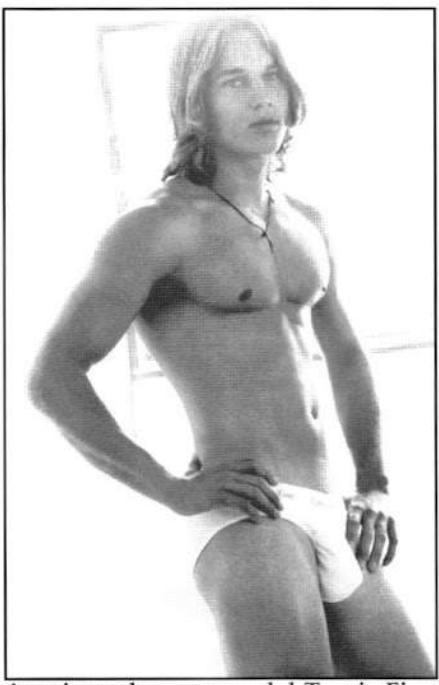
BUFFY THE VAMPIRE SLAYER ended its run on the UPN network in May with an epic finale that brought soulful vampire Angel (David Boreanaz) and rogue slayer Faith (Eliza Dushku) back to the fold for an action-packed, moving farewell. So, what's next for the Scooby gang? Well, an animated BUFFY series is already in preproduction, with most of the

original actors expected to voice their roles. Anthony Stewart Head is due to return as Rupert Giles in RIPPER, the still-gestating UK-based production (which may be a one-off telefilm rather than a miniseries as originally planned); he's also tentatively set to make appearances on the WB Network's spin-off ANGEL. Also due to make the move to ANGEL next season is James Marsters, whose portrayal of Spike, the virile vamp doomed by his love of the Slayer, has been a highlight of BUFFY's latter seasons. As for an official spin-off of BUFFY featuring an alternate Sunnydale Slayer—creator Joss Whedon isn't closing the coffin completely, but don't expect any resurrections on the fall slate.

The Holmes Video Vault

Quick, Watson, the remote! Sherlock Holmes fans have an embarrassment of riches in store for them on DVD. At the forefront of the good news is the announcement that MPI Home Video will release restored editions of the Basil Rathbone/Nigel Bruce film series starting this fall, at a rate of two titles per month. The discs are mastered from the recent UCLA restorations, and include 20th Century Fox's THE HOUND OF THE BASKERVILLES and ADVENTURES OF SHERLOCK HOLMES, in addition to the 12 Universal titles. Scarlet Street's trusty Reditor, Richard Valley, provides liner notes for the series. Scarlet columnist David Stuart Davies will have a hand in the DVD extras, too.

Billy Wilder's delectable valentine to the Great Detective, THE PRIVATE LIFE



Aussie underwear model Travis Fimmel trades in his jockeys for a loin cloth when he takes on the role of Tarzan on TV this coming fall.

OF SHERLOCK HOLMES, debuts on DVD in July in a special edition jam-packed with extras—deleted scenes, script excerpts, stills, and new interviews with film editor Ernest Waller and actor Christopher Lee, who portrays a memorable Mycroft Holmes.

More Video News

MGM adds to its impressive slate of horror releases in August with a Midnight Movies double feature of Hammer's COUNTESS DRACULA/THE VAMPIRE LOVERS (with a commentary track on COUNTESS featuring star Ingrid Pitt). Roger Corman/Poe fans can collect pairings of THE HAUNTED PALACE/TOWER OF LONDON, THE RAVEN/COMEDY OF TERRORS (with a trio of featurettes), and a combo of TOMB OF LIGEIA (with a Corman commentary) and the 1972 Vincent Price TV production AN EVENING OF EDGAR ALLAN POE. MGM special edition DVDs of THE HOWLING and BURNT OFFERINGS are also due in August, both featuring director and star commentaries. Other August DVD debuts from MGM include THE BROOD, SQUIRM, CLOWNHOUSE, and a double feature of POLTERGEIST II/POLTERGEIST III.

CAMPION, the 1989 BBC series based on Margery Allingham's detective novels of the 1930s, is newly available on home video. Former DOCTOR WHO Peter Davidson stars as the bespectacled amateur sleuth Albert Campion, who is aided by Lugg, his bulldog of a valet, portrayed memorably by the late Brian Glover. A set of four feature-length stories from the series' first season is available on either DVD or VHS for \$79.99... Criterion has reissued their five Alfred Hitchcock releases—THE 39 STEPS, THE LADY VANISHES, REBECCA, SPELLBOUND and

NOTORIOUS—in a five-disc boxed set entitled "Wrong Men and Notorious Women" for \$124.95.

Meanwhile, across the pond in DVD Region 2, U.K. fans of the Great Detective can purchase all 41 episodes of Jeremy Brett's SHERLOCK HOLMES series—including the five feature-length shows—in a hefty 23-disc boxed set from Granada for £159.99. Other recent Region 2 releases include 17 new Universal DVD editions of some Hitchcock classics, including FOREIGN CORRESPONDENT, MR. AND MRS. SMITH, and SUSPICION (£19.99 each). Hopefully, we jealous Stateside fans will be able to pop the Hitchcock titles in our own DVD players soon. (Here in the Land of the Free, the Jeremy Brett episodes are already available—or about to be—from MPI Home Video.)

Gone, but never to be forgotten: theatrical executive and horror star scion Dwight Frye Jr.; children's broadcaster Fred Rogers; vaudevillian Irving Foy; paddle-ball maestro Reggie (HOUSE OF WAX) Rymal; cartoonists Al Hirschfeld and Bill Mauldin; singers Maurice Gibb, Johnny Paycheck (Donald Lytle), Nina Simone, and Edwin Starr; musicians Lonnie Donegan, Teddy Edwards, Roland Hanna, Earl King, Richard Newell, Mongo Santamaría, and Joe Strummer (John Mellor); actor/singer Adam Faith; songwriters Felice Bryant and Doris Fisher; composers Ron Goodwin, Rusty Magee, and Claike Richardson; photographer Herb Ritts; animators Bob Matz and Zack Schwartz; playwrights Jean Kerr, Frederick Knott, and Peter Stone; special effects artist Bert Luxford; cinematographer Conrad Hall; screenwriters Françoise Giroud, Paul Monash, and Fred Schiller; producers Jack Brodsky, Joe Connelly, Fred Freiberger, Jerry Gross, Anthony Havelock-Allan, John Mantley, William T. Orr, and Michael Wayne; directors Stan Brakhage, René Cardona Jr., Anthony M. Dawson (Antonio Margheriti), Kinji Fukasaku, George Roy Hill, Ian MacNaughton, Norman Panama, Karel Reisz, and Sheldon Reynolds; fifties supermodel Suzy Parker; and actors Parley Baer, Elaine Barrie, Mary Brian, Horst Buchholz, Vinnette Carroll, Nell Carter, Leslie Cheung, Lana Clarkson, James Coburn, Richard Crenna, Brad Dexter, Anthony Eisley, Mary Ellis, Kam Fong, Daniel Gélin, Émile Genest, Massimo Girotti, Anne Gwynne, Dame Thora Hird, Robert Ivers, Michael Jeter, Susan Johnson, John Justin, Stacy Keach Sr., Andrea King, Holly Landers, Barbara Lott, Klaus Löwitsch, Beth Marion, Susan Fleming Marx, Karen Morley, Wolfgang Preiss, Vera Hruba Ralston, Robert Rockwell, Johnny Silver, Dick Simmons, Alberto Sordi, Jeanne Stuart, Lady Rachel Kempson, Lynne Thigpen, Kenneth Tobey, Leopoldo Trieste, Billy Van, Nedra Volz, Devina Whitehouse, Dame Wendy Hiller, and Vera Zorina.



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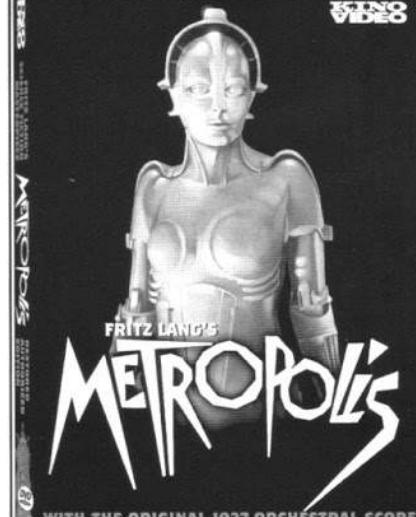
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Scarlet Street's DVD Reviews

MURDER BY DECREE

Anchor Bay Entertainment

\$19.98

"I say, Holmes," Dr. Watson implores the Great Detective during a baffling development in the Jack the Ripper murders. "What is this mumbo jumbo?"

In 1979, Sherlock the super sleuth once again tracked London's infamous slasher in a breathtaking thriller called MURDER BY DECREE. Filled with foggy Victorian atmosphere and sterling performances, the Ripper mystery amounted to much more than mere "mumbo jumbo."

Bob Clark—whose directorial credits range from the chilling BLACK CHRISTMAS (1975) to the charming A CHRISTMAS STORY (1983)—molded MURDER BY DECREE into a suspenseful, sharp-witted speculation on the identity of history's most elusive serial killer. The movie generated only modest business at the box office, but it earned positive

praise from critics (*Playboy* called it "a smashing cerebral thriller," while Rex Reed declared it "gripping and totally fascinating") and attracted a loyal following made up of Holmes enthusiasts and amateur Ripperologists.

Now, a quarter of a century after the making of MURDER BY DECREE, Anchor Bay rewards the faithful with a DVD that presents the film in its original widescreen format. The disc also offers such amplifying extras as "Jack the Ripper, I Presume" (a lavishly illustrated essay by Michael Felsher), plus a trailer, poster and still galleries, and a DVD-ROM of the original script. In his affectionate audio commentary, Clark offers insights ranging from his original casting choices (longtime enemies Peter O'Toole and Laurence Olivier agreed, briefly, to set aside their differences and play Holmes and Watson) to the genesis of the beloved "squashed pea" scene.



The Ripper solution proposed in MURDER BY DECREE (scripted by THUNDERBALL screenwriter John Hopkins) was inspired by Stephen Knight's sensational 1976 book, *Jack the Ripper: The Final Solution*. Knight wrote that the murders were part of a sinister Masonic crusade—executed by a royal coachman, a court surgeon, and impressionist painter Walter Sickert—to protect the British monarchy from scandal. The film focuses only on the sword-slashing driver and the scalpel-wielding doc, changing their names in the process. (The graphic novel and 2001 film FROM HELL follow the same scenario, eliminating the artist but restoring the true identities of the two remaining suspects. Patricia Cornwell's 2002 book, *Portrait of a Killer: Jack the Ripper, Case Closed*, identifies Sickert as the prime perpetrator of the crimes.)

MURDER BY DECREE transforms an intricate, thought-provoking theory into a lucid, compelling thriller that places Holmes and Watson's fictional figures within the gruesome context of historical fact. Arthur Conan Doyle's literary duo had fought the Ripper onscreen before, in a taut, well-acted 1965 shocker called A STUDY IN TERROR, but DECREE is far more intriguing, ambitious, and accomplished, due in large part to the inspired casting of Christopher Plummer as a sensitive, socially conscious Holmes, and James Mason as a shrewd, stalwart, wry-witted Watson.

Although produced on a limited budget, MURDER BY DECREE offers evocative production design, spine-tingling music, and eerie camerawork. Its heart, however, remains the warm rapport between Plummer and Mason—two pros working at the peak of their powers. The exceptional ensemble includes David Hemmings, Susan Clark, John Gielgud, Anthony Quayle (who played a decidedly different role in A STUDY IN TERROR), Donald Sutherland, Frank Finlay (who plays the hapless Inspector Lestrade in both films), and—in a haunting, heartbreaking scene—Genevieve Bujold.

"This was a work of passion for all of us," Clark recalls in his genial commentary. "The project seemed blessed."

—Terry Pace

MR. MOTO'S LAST WARNING

Alpha Video

\$7.98

B-movie fanatics will be unable to resist any movie starring Peter Lorre, George Sanders, John Carradine, and Ricardo Cortez, and MR. MOTO'S LAST WARNING (1939), the sixth in the 20th Century Fox series starring Lorre as John P. Marquand's Japanese spy, won't disappoint.

The Hitchcockian plot concerns Fabian (Cortez), a ventriloquist in the employ of "a foreign power" whose dummy literally holds important international secrets. Keeping an eye on him is Richard Burke (Carradine), who, using the name Danforth, is a member of Fabian's gang of conspirators. Watching from the sidelines is curio shop owner H. Kuroki, bet-

ter known to filmgoers—though not the baddies, who think they've killed him—as Mr. Moto.

Helped by inept adventurer Rollo Venables (Robert Coote) and Fabian's disillusioned girlfriend, Connie Porter (Virginia Field), Mr. Moto foils a plot to blow up the flagship of the French fleet, but only at the cost of Burke, who dies a gruesome death in a diving bell. Our



Japanese hero rounds up the gang, finding himself a bit embarrassed when he learns the identity of the foreign power for whom they toiled. (Only two series entries followed LAST WARNING before Mr. Moto retired from the screen. He resurfaced briefly in 1965's THE RETURN OF MR. MOTO, with Henry Silva inadequately subbing for the late Lorre.)

MR. MOTO'S LAST WARNING is the sole title in the series to have fallen into public domain, which means it's also the title more fans have seen than any other. It further means that there have been countless subpar videotapes of the film available over the years. That's why it's a pleasure to report that Alpha Video's DVD presentation is among the best this company has to offer, with a relatively sharp picture and a blessed minimum of scratches and other flaws. The price is right, and the film is fine entertainment. Thank you, Mr. Moto—and Alpha Video.

—Drew Sullivan

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20th Century Fox Home Entertainment

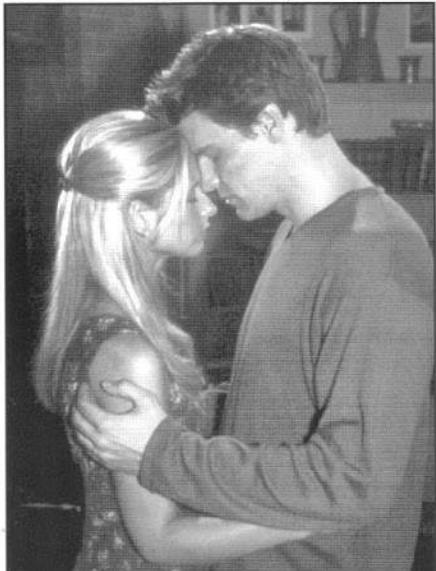
\$59.98

Angel, that brooding Irish vamp from BUFFY THE VAMPIRE SLAYER, has relocated from Sunnydale to the appropriately named City of Angels for his own successful spin-off series. Retaining the premise established by BUFFY, Angel is (thanks to a gypsy's curse) a bloodsucker with a soul and conscience, who is trying to atone for his past sins. As a private eye in Los Angeles, a city rife with souls needing to be saved, Angel's quest for redemption adds up to one of the most moving, exciting genre-bending series ever to find its way onto television.

Fox Home Video has released the first season of ANGEL on DVD, as a gorgeous boxed set featuring the initial 22 episodes spread across six discs.

Few series have been as consistently fine in their freshman season as ANGEL. Creator Joss Whedon (also of BUFFY) is a TV force to be reckoned with, willing to take incredible writing risks as he seamlessly threads characters and situations back and forth between his hit series. In Season One, Whedon even has the nerve and savvy to kill off a major character only nine episodes into the show, a touch which the Master, Alfred Hitchcock, would have certainly cheered.

David Boreanaz, whether brooding soulfully, kick-boxing evil forces, or basking in the rare gift of one day in the sunshine, perfectly inhabits the skin of the vampire-formerly-known-as-Liam (or Angelus). Boreanaz' work is as adept as that of David Duchovny's early work on THE X-FILES: a taut, tightrope walk of sympathetic sincerity and dead-on, deadpan humor. Opposite Boreanaz is another ex-Sunnydaler—Charisma Carpenter as Cordelia Chase, who comes into her own as an actress, holding her ground amidst all the demonic goings on. When Cordelia rents a haunted apartment, it's one of the season's highlights. Banished, former Watcher Wesley Wyndam-Pryce is priggishly and pragmatically played by Alix Denisof, who joins the series midway through the year as a "rogue demon slayer." However, it's Doyle (Glenn Quinn), a human/demon hybrid, who provides the catalyst—not to mention the heart—of ANGEL's premiere season. The character arc entrusted to Quinn might have driven a lesser talent into spasms, but, as



a gifted emissary from The Powers That Be, the late actor, who died of a drug overdose in 2002 at the age of 32, comes close to stealing every scene he inhabits.

Whether Angel Investigations is battling demons or the slick, sick law firm of Wolfram & Hart, ANGEL is a marvelous, macabre and moody entertainment. Fox lets the entertainment take center stage, with little special feature content. Whedon's commentary track the first episode is a standout, a fast-paced chat

fest worthy of attention. The richly produced look of the series is captured efficiently on DVD, making this set a must-have for genre fans.

—Anthony Dale

MUSCLE BEACH PARTY/SKI PARTY

\$14.98

MUSCLE BEACH PARTY (1964), AIP's second installment in its Beach Party series, finds Frankie (Frankie Avalon) and Dee Dee (Annette Funicello) leading their buddies back to the ocean for another swinging summer. Their activities are unexpectedly goosed by the arrival of trainer Jack Fanny (Don Rickles) and his corps of muscle-building disciples. Meanwhile, a man-hungry contessa named Julie (Luciana Paluzzi) and her business manager S.Z. (Buddy Hackett) come ashore to find her a suitable mate.

Julie initially sets her eager sights on the reigning "Mr. Galaxy," Flex Martini (Rock Stevens)—until she hears Frankie's soulful ballad, "A Boy Needs a Girl." Her refocused attention refuels the on-again, off-again nature of Frankie's and Dee Dee's relationship. Although the California couple eventually patches things up, Flex and the bodybuilders are far less conciliatory, launching a climactic battle royal with the surfers. In one of the series' most famous cameos, a beloved horror icon finally halts the slapstick mayhem by giving Flex his comeuppance.

Cast members Avalon, Funicello, John Ashley, Jody McCrea, Candy Johnson, Morey Amsterdam, and Dick Dale and the Del Tones return from BEACH PARTY (1963), and are joined by new players Rickles and thrush Donna Loren. Rock Stevens' hefty screen presence so impressed AIP brass that they dispatched him to Italy to star in GOLIATH AT THE CONQUEST OF DAMASCUS (1964) and three other sword and sandal pictures intended for American television.

MUSCLE BEACH PARTY is entertaining enough, although it remains less sophisticated than its predecessor and never attains the heights of the Altman-esque BEACH BLANKET BINGO (1965). The strongmen, sporting pink capes and briefs that probably wouldn't pass muster at the real Muscle Beach, offer an amusing alternative to the usual Erik Von Zipper biker rat pack.

SKI PARTY (1965) transplants the Beach franchise to the slopes of Sun Valley. It matters little, because our heroes Todd (Frankie Avalon) and Craig (Dwayne Hickman) are still figuratively getting sand kicked in their faces. The two friends want to hook up with Linda (Deborah Walley) and Barbara (Yvonne Craig), but the cocksure campus stud, Freddie (Aron Kincaid), is monopolizing most of the girl skiers.

Desperate to ferret out Freddie's appeal to womankind, Todd and Craig disguise themselves as "Jane" and "Nora" respectively, to uncover his secret. (Farceur Hickman was no stranger to transvestism, having varsity-dragged in the "I

"Was a Boy Sorority Girl" episode of *DO-BIE GILLIS*.) The clueless coeds buy the deception, as does Freddie, who develops a crush on "Nora" because she's different. The double entendre humor is predictable, but surprisingly Craig eventually falls for Freddie and accepts his pin!



SKI PARTY is a pleasant diversion that draws as much inspiration from *SOME LIKE IT HOT* (1959) as from previous AIP comedies. As the bumbling lodge director confronting gender identity issues of his own, Robert Q. Lewis represents the cast's only "funny adult." Annette Funicello contributes a sly cameo as a teacher who's prim by day but indulges in drive-in dating with her male students after dark. Lesley Gore and James Brown pop up for musical numbers.

Funicello's ever-controversial song "You'll Never Change Him," deleted from theatrical release prints of *BEACH BLANKET BINGO* (1965) but later reinstated for TV editions, surfaces here rewritten for Deborah Walley as "We'll Never Change 'Em." The backing vocal/instrumental track is identical in both versions, but Walley's updated lyrics are much more ironic, given the presence of "Jane" and "Nora" during her performance. The revamped composition underlines the film's off-kilter theme.

MGM's two-fer DVD presents both films in widescreen (2:35:1) format only. The colors are splendid considering their vintage, and the letterboxing offers a bounty of newly-revealed peripheral detail. The source materials used for the transfers are virtually flawless, equal to the high standard of the studio's previous Beach Party discs. The only supplements are trailer previews for each title.

—John F. Black

TIME AFTER TIME Warner Home Video

\$19.98

What do you get when you mix H.G. Wells and Jack the Ripper, then add a dash of romantic comedy for seasoning?

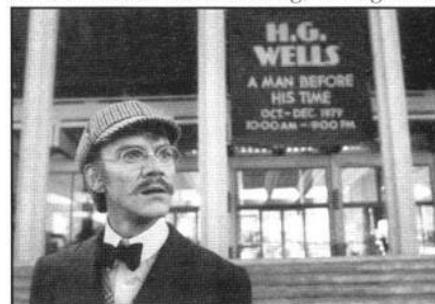
One of the most delightful sci fi concoctions of the 1970s, that's what.

Time travel movies don't come any more enjoyable than this enchanting yarn. The story's central conceit has science fiction writer H.G. Wells (Malcolm McDowell) actually inventing a working time machine. When one of Wells' friends, Dr. John Stevenson (David Warner), is exposed as Jack the Ripper, Stevenson uses Wells' machine to elude police by escaping into the future. Wells pursues Stevenson from Victorian London to the San Francisco of the late seventies, where he meets and falls in love with the strong-willed Amy Robbins (Lesley Gore).

The film features a lot of fish-out-water humor, as the story's 19th-century British protagonist tries to cope with 20th-century America. Though much of the film is played for laughs, Saucy Jack is treated with the respect due one of history's most legendary and brutal villains—which is to say, he remains scary as hell. When (inevitably) Amy emerges as Stevenson's next intended victim, the film begins to generate real tension. Warner is spellbinding as Stevenson, so much so that, since seeing this film in 1979, it's Warner's face I envision whenever the Ripper comes to mind.

Director Nicholas Meyer strikes the perfect tone—light and breezy, but not without the sense of menace needed to propel the story forward. Briskly paced and relentlessly entertaining, *TIME AFTER TIME* is a career-best for Meyer, who also helmed the two finest entries in the *STAR TREK* movie franchise—*STAR TREK II: THE WRATH OF KHAN* (1982) and *STAR TREK VI: THE UNDISCOVERED COUNTRY* (1991).

Warner Bros. has done superbly well by the film with this disc. *TIME AFTER TIME* is offered in a razor-sharp 2.35:1 letterboxed, anamorphic transfer, with vivid color and pristine sound. The bonuses include an amusing, though not



particularly illuminating, commentary featuring Meyer, McDowell, and Warner; the theatrical trailer; and filmographies.

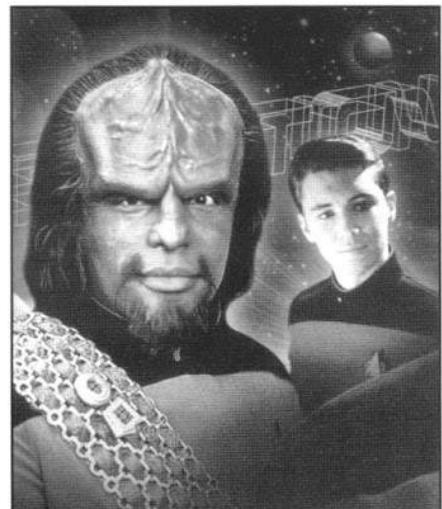
—Mark Clark

STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION (Seasons Four and Five) Paramount Home Video \$139.99 each

For most fans, *STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION* really took off during Seasons Four and Five, after an extended shakedown cruise that saw the show's

pieces falling into place. Instead of a crew, the characters had become a family, and the episodes, from week to week, began to reflect that. Like a family, their stories couldn't be confined to single, hour-long episodes. Emphasis was put on the characters' personal growth, and multi-episode plots began in earnest.

After his horrific kidnapping by the Borg in the fourth-season opener, Captain Jean-Luc Picard (Patrick Stewart) became far more interesting. There's even a sequel episode, appropriately entitled "Family," in which Picard comes to terms with his experience, and we're introduced to a number of the other crew-member's families. It's an extraordinary episode, with none of the traditional *STAR TREK* threats to the universe; in-



stead, it's a thoughtful, amusing, and touching slice of the lives of the Enterprise-D crew. In "Brothers," we get to see not only Data's evil brother, but his mad-scientist father (all played brilliantly by Brent Spiner).

As with all families, sometimes a member moves on, and Wesley Crusher (Wil Wheaton) left the show in Season Four's "Final Mission." It was a pity, too. For all of the fan's lip-service to tolerance, Wheaton was singled out for their ire; Klingons and androids on the bridge were just fine, but they couldn't extend their tolerance to include young prodigies as well. Wheaton was (and is) a terrific actor, and on *THE NEXT GENERATION*, he was just coming into his own. Ironically, Wheaton did return to the series in two of Season Five's finest hours, "The Game" and "The First Duty," the latter showing him unfairly becoming a Starfleet Academy pariah—no doubt an editorial commentary on how Wheaton was treated by *STAR TREK*'s more intolerant fans.

Other highlights include "The Drumhead," a courtroom drama with guest star Jean Simmons conducting a Starfleet witch hunt, and "Qpid," in which the cast plays Robin Hood at the whim of all-powerful Q (John de Lancie). "First Contact" is an extraordinary episode in which the Enterprise-D encounters a race

of paranoid aliens, told mostly from the aliens' point of view. "The Outcast," a uniquely TREK take on gay themes, demonstrates the tragedy of a society unwilling to accept the sexually variant.

There are other terrific episodes, but also several disappointments. Denise Crosby returned to the show for some lackluster intrigue as the villainous Selaa, the half-Romulan daughter of her original character. The intrigue also included an appearance by the original series' beloved Spock (Leonard Nimoy). In what should have been a highlight of the entire series, his presence is wasted in a pedestrian two-part espionage episode.

During Season Five, Gene Roddenberry passed away. Losing their patriarch, the cast and crew of the program gave him a fine and lasting tribute; they guided his creation with intelligence and affection, and stayed true to the values he insisted belonged in STAR TREK. Humanity, he believed, is capable of embracing our many differences, and creating a utopian future. Roddenberry left on a high note—Season Five is widely considered the best year of the series.

Like the first three volumes (reviewed in *Scarlet Street* #46), the audio/video elements of the series is the best you can expect—and, unlike cables, they're presented uncut. For the high price, the extras on the discs are on the skimpy side, with no deleted scenes, commentary tracks, or isolated scores. There are some entertaining (if ultimately trivial) documentaries that imply that the cast and crew were one big happy family, with only trivial disagreements. Of course, the truth is far different, as any rabid Trekkie will tell you. For the real dirt—well, it's only a matter of time before the tell-all books on STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION will be written.

Are you reading this, Mr. Wheaton?
—Robin Anderson

THE CARRY ON COLLECTION Anchor Bay Home Entertainment \$89.98

From 1958 to 1992, there were 30 movies, several television specials, and even live stage shows based on the wild antics of the Carry On Gang—yet, beyond their home in England, they aren't very well known. That's all changed, now. Anchor Bay has very generously sought to correct this atrocious error by releasing a wonderful box set featuring the first 12 films in the series on six discs, along with the compilation feature THAT'S CARRY ON (1977) on a seventh.

Fans of lowbrow comic Benny Hill and such British sitcoms as ARE YOU BEING SERVED? will discover that such shows often borrowed heavily from the humor found in the charming Carry Ons. Even AUSTIN POWERS (1997) lifted gags from the series. The jokes are very much in the style of naughty British postcards. Many punchlines wouldn't be considered politically correct today, but there's a certain level of innocence in most of the Carry Ons that renders them inoffensive. Often, the films spoof popular pictures of

the period (1964's CARRY ON CLEO was actually filmed on leftover sets from some other movie starring Elizabeth Taylor and Richard Burton), or they lampoon spy films, westerns, seafaring epics, or even Hammer Horrors (1966's CARRY ON SCREAMING). Other entries in the series find hearty laughs in the military, hospitals, and schools.



The Carry Ons hit their peak when they showcased such comic masters as Sid James, Kenneth Williams, Charles Hawtrey, Hattie Jacques, Joan Sims, Kenneth Connor, and Barbara Windsor. The films also introduced many new talents (Jim Dale, for instance) and featured such veteran performers as Joan (Miss Marple) Hickson.

Anchor Bay's Collection contains CARRY ON SERGEANT (1958), CARRY ON TEACHER (1959), CARRY ON NURSE (1969), CARRY ON CONSTABLE (1960), CARRY ON REGARDLESS (1961), CARRY ON CRUISING (1962), CARRY ON CABBY (1963), CARRY ON CLEO, CARRY ON JACK (1964), CARRY ON SPYING (1964), CARRY ON COWBOY (1965), and CARRY ON SCREAMING. The quality is excellent, and the laughs top notch. The only extras are the original trailers. (In England, several titles are being issued with commentaries by Jim Dale.)

One hopes that the set will prove popular enough to warrant the release of the rest of the series in the States. In the meantime, carry on laughing!

—Kevin G. Shinnick

BEGINNING OF THE END Image Entertainment \$19.99

Following in the footsteps of THEM! (1954), Bert I. Gordon's BEGINNING OF THE END (1957) showcases the threat of six-legged, gargantuan insects on a rampage against humans. Yessirree, it's giant insect time once again, and once again that 1950s catalyst of choice is radiation—this time from an agricultural experiment gone awry.

Reporter Audrey Aimes (the sultry Peggy Castle), always on the lookout for the big story, joins forces with scientist Ed Wainwright (Peter Graves) to combat the leaping locusts set on destroying the nation's heartland. It's a deadly war of man against nature, with towns demolished and a monstrous military secret. As the horde of hoppers makes their way towards Chicago, only Aimes and Wainwright can defeat the menace in time.

Often dismissed as a schlockmeister, Gordon's films are always watchable, and possess their own natural charms. The grasshoppers created by his special effects team—namely, Bert and his then-wife, Flora—aren't always in the same league as the ants created for THEM!, but they're just right for this flick. Image Entertainment has provided a spiffy new transfer, created exclusively for this release from the film's original negative. The company has also opted to enhance the film for widescreen television, creating a truly creepy-crawly presentation. BEGINNING OF THE END has likely never looked this good before.

The DVD's sole special feature certainly won't make you hopping mad—it's an audio commentary moderated by Bruce Kimmel, who leads the distaff side of the Gordon family—Flora and daughter Susan Gordon, known for her acting roles in ATTACK OF THE PUPPET PEOPLE (1958) and TORMENTED (1960), among other films. Kimmel keeps things flowing, and the mother/daughter combination is rare in DVD-land. All told, the commentary track is as much fun as the film itself.

—Anthony Dale

THE LEATHER BOYS Kino Video \$24.95

A happy couple in the same motorcycle gang, Reggie (Colin Campbell) and Dot (Rita Tushingham, sporting a bouffant that's bigger than her motorcycle helmet) decide to wed. The honeymoon is over before it even begins, though, with arguments starting on their wedding night and continuing constantly afterwards. Reg is not happy that Dot has bleached her hair and never does housework. Dot is angry that Reg is rarely home and refuses to sleep with her. After Reg's grandfather dies, matters come to a head. Reg's grandmother (Gladys Henson) refuses to move into a retirement home, but doesn't want to be alone. Reg offers to move in—the place is much larger than his and Dot's one-room flat. When Dot refuses, insulting Gran in the process, Reg moves in without her. He brings along Pete (Dudley Sutton), an old



friend who's just reentered Reg's life. The two spend an idyllic period together, even sleeping in the same bed.

Dot has started seeing another man, but lies to Reg that she's pregnant in

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LEFT: Inspector Japp (Philip Jackson), Captain Hastings (Hugh Fraser), and Hercule Poirot (David Suchet) stop to smell the flowers between murder investigations. RIGHT: Giles and Gwenda Reed (John Moulder-Brown and Geraldine Alexander) call on Miss Jane Marple (Joan Hickson) to solve a SLEEPING MURDER (1987).

As befitting the Queen of Crime, Dame Agatha Christie created not one, but two classic detectives—the elderly, nosy, English village spinster, Miss Jane Marple, and the pompous, impeccable, incredibly vain Belgian, Hercule Poirot. For decades, Christie's sleuths entertained winningly on the printed page, but never quite translated successfully—or, at least, accurately—to screens big and small. Then, in the 1980s, British television found the perfect Miss Marple in Joan Hickson, and the definitive Poirot in David Suchet. Before her death in October 1998, Hickson starred in televisions of every Miss Marple novel, beginning with *THE BODY IN THE LIBRARY* (1984) and ending with *THE MIRROR CRACK'D* (1992). Suchet made his first appearance as Poirot in 1989, starring in a series of one-hour episodes based on Christie's short stories, and (following a hiatus) has recently returned to the role in several full-length programs based on the Poirot novels.

Another fairly recent development is the release on DVD, from various companies, of all the Miss Marple whodunits and a sizable chuck of the Poirots. The Marples are available in three volumes, two from A&E and one from Warner Home Video's BBC division.

A&E's first volume (\$39.95) contains *SLEEPING MURDER* (1987), *4:50 FROM PADDINGTON* (1987), *A CARIBBEAN MYSTERY* (1989), and *THE MIRROR*

CRACK'D. PADDINGTON is the most famous title, having been filmed in 1961 as *MURDER, SHE SAID*, the first of four Marple features starring the totally inappropriate but hilariously funny and endearing Margaret Rutherford. (Hickson has a featured role!) *The Caribbean caper* benefits from the presence of Donald Pleasence as millionaire Jason Rafiel. Best of the lot is *SLEEPING MURDER*, concerning a lovely young woman (Geraldine Alexander) haunted by a long-forgotten crime she believes she can't possibly have witnessed. *Scarlet Street* favorite and Hammer Films star (1971's *VAMPIRE CIRCUS*) John Moulder-Brown plays her handsome husband, in one of his last roles before starting an acting school in England.

The second Marple volume from A&E (priced at \$49.95) offers *THE MOVING FINGER* (1985), *MURDER AT THE VICARAGE* (1986), *AT BERTRAM'S HOTEL* (1987), *NEMESIS* (1987), and *THEY DO IT WITH MIRRORS* (1991). The late, great Joan Greenwood (memorable in several Alec Guinness comedies and the 1952 film of *THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING EARNEST*) made one of her last appearances in *AT BERTRAM'S HOTEL*. (She died the following year.) Jean Simmons lends star quality to *MIRRORS*. The late Paul Eddington, so funny in the British sitcoms *THE GOOD LIFE* (*GOOD NEIGHBORS* in the USA); *YES MINISTER*; and *YES, PRIME MINISTER*, and like Moulder-Brown a veter-

eran of Hammer horrors (1968's *THE DEVIL RIDES OUT*), plays the vicar whose vicarage is sullied by murder. *NEMESIS* was the second Christie novel to feature the character of Jason Rafiel, although it was filmed first. The millionaire's death sets an especially intriguing mystery in motion. (Beware of milky drinks!) Rafiel is played here—albeit briefly—by Frank Gatling.

The only special features on the first A&E volume are scene selections and a set of three cards with a very brief biography of Miss Marple, including a list of all of Christie's stories about her, without any publication data except for the dates. The second volume substitutes a bio of Christie. There are no language selections or caption options for either volume. The picture quality is grainy. The colors are serviceable, but not saturated.

Warner Home Video's volume (overpriced at \$49.98) contains *THE BODY IN THE LIBRARY*, *A MURDER IS ANNOUNCED* (1985, and possibly the best in the series), and *A POCKETFUL OF RYE* (1985). Extras include *CRIMES DOES PAY*, a featurette about the Christie centenary attended—in character—by both Hickson and Suchet.

A&E's Poirot DVD releases consist of mysteries coproduced with Carnival Films for airing on the A&E cable channel—*THE MURDER OF ROGER ACKROYD* (2000), *LORD EDGWELL DIES* (2000), *EVIL UNDER THE SUN*

MURDERS MOST FOUL

Hercule Poirot and Miss Marple Investigate

by Lelia Loban and Richard Valley

(2001), and MURDER IN MESOPOTAMIA (2001). The programs are every bit as much the Art Deco delights as those produced a decade earlier, with Suchet in fine, fussy fettle as Poirot, supported by his cast of regulars—Hugh Fraser as Captain Arthur Hastings (Poirot's Watson), Pauline Moran as Miss Felicity Lemon (Poirot's secretary), and Philip Jackson as Chief Inspector James Japp (Poirot's Lestrade). The picture quality is considerably better than in the Miss Marples, though once again the extras (interactive menus, scene selections, a couple of biographies) are practically nonexistent. The complete collection is available in a box set for \$59.95.

AGATHA CHRISTIE'S POIROT (the umbrella title) began as a series of hour-long episodes and Acorn Media has at last begun releasing them to DVD. Volume One features THE DISAPPEARANCE OF MR. DAVENHEIM (in which Japp bets Poirot that the Belgian can't solve a murder without leaving his apartment), THE VEILED LADY, and THE LOST MINE. The mysteries have much in common with Arthur Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes stories; in fact, part of the fun is matching one detective's adventures with the other's. Volume Two contains THE CORNISH MYSTERY, DOUBLE SIN, and THE ADVENTURE OF THE CHEAP FLAT. As with the A&E releases, the picture and sound quality is fine, and the extras are unexceptional.

Acorn Media also offers the following feature-length Poirot mysteries—PERIL AT END HOUSE (1990); THE MYSTERIOUS AFFAIR AT STYLES (1990); THE ABC MURDERS (1992); ONE, TWO, BUCKLE MY SHOE (1993); DEATH IN THE CLOUDS (1993); HERCULE POIROT'S CHRISTMAS (1994); MURDER ON THE LINKS (1995); HICKORY DICKORY DOCK (1995); and DUMB WITNESS (1996), priced at \$24.95 each. These programs are among the finest classic whodunits ever adapted for television. THE ABC MURDERS is, in fact, one of Christie's triumphs, a conclusion no one would come to after having seen the abysmal 1966 theatrical feature (titled THE ALPHABET MURDERS) starring the miscast Tony Randall as Poirot and Robert Morley as Hastings. The little Belgian receives the following message: "Mr. Hercule Poirot, You fancy yourself, don't you, at solving mysteries that are too difficult for our poor thick-headed British police? Let us see, Mr. Clever Poirot, just how clever you can be. Perhaps you'll find this nut too hard to crack. Look out for Andover, on the 21st of the month. Yours sincerely, A.B.C." There follows the murder of Alice Ascher in Andover, which in turn is followed by the murder of Betty Barnard at Bexhill-on-Sea, and Carmichael Clarke in Churston. And then there's the strange, secretive little man named Alexander Bonaparte Cust (Donald Sumpter) . . .

PERIL AT END HOUSE is another winning yarn. On holiday with Hastings

in Cornwall, Poirot comes to the rescue of heiress and potential murder victim Nick Buckley (Polly Walker). A comic highlight of the episode is the seance presided over by the redoubtable Miss Lemon, which helps trap the killer.

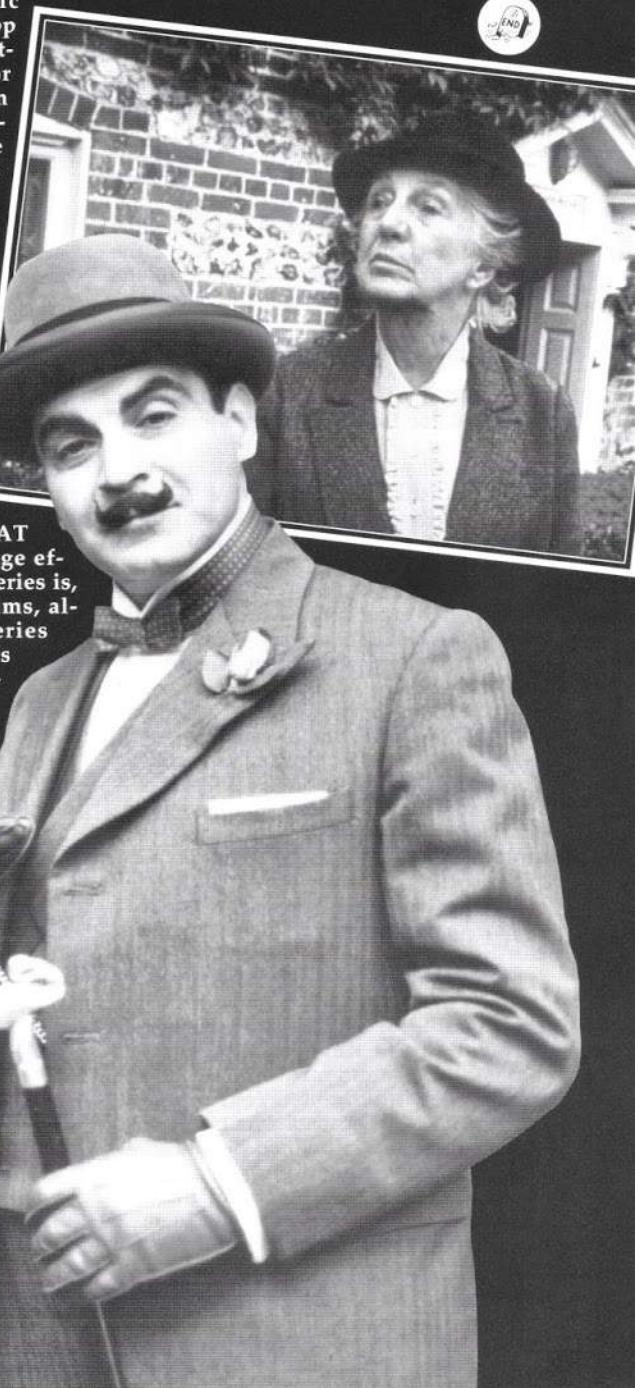
ONE, TWO, BUCKLE MY SHOE and HICKORY DICKORY DOCK betray Christie's lifelong fascination with nursery rhymes (as does the Marple mystery A POCKETFUL OF RYE). In the first, Poirot solves the murder of his own dentist (Laurence Harrington). In HICKORY DICKORY DOCK, the crimes are set in a student hostel run by Miss Lemon's sister, Florence Hubbard (Sarah Badel). The only witness to murders most foul isn't talking, though, and no wonder—it's a mouse!

Unlike Sherlock Holmes and Inspector Lestrade, Hercule Poirot and Chief Inspector Japp are friends more than rivals, and HICKORY DICKORY DOCK includes some clever domestic scenes between the two. Mrs. Japp is away from home and the Scotland Yarde is forced to fend for himself, so Poirot invites him home to dinner. The Englishman's taste buds, however, are hardly attuned to the Belgian's delicate culinary skills. Later, Japp proudly serves up a horrid meal to Poirot, consisting of mashed potatoes, "mushy peas," and "faggot." Poirot claims that, tragically, he can't eat any of it because he's allergic to faggot. Instead, Japp offers Poirot spotted dick for dessert. (Interestingly, Suchet himself once played Japp, opposite Peter Ustinov's Poirot in the 1985 TV movie THIRTEEN AT DINNER.)

THE MYSTERIOUS AFFAIR AT STYLES is another above-average effort (though "average" for this series is, as with the Miss Marple telefilms, already better than many other series at their best). Based on Christie's 1920 debut novel and set in wartime 1917 (the rest of the television episodes take place in the 1930s), STYLES concerns Poirot's first investigation in England. The story begins with Hastings, who has been shipped home from the front not-too-seriously wounded, watching a hand-cranked newsreel in the hospital, with other wounded men. The silent newsreel about the war depicts "New Flanders Offensive. 7th June 1917 General Haig attacks Ypres." Another newsreel shows Belgians arriving in England. Hastings's old friend, John Cavendish (David Rintoul), stops by for a visit, and tells Hastings that

John's mother, Emily (Gillian Barge), has suddenly married Alfred Ingelthorp (Michael Cronin), an unpleasant man 20 years her junior. Cavendish invites Hastings to visit the family estate in the village of Styles St. Mary, which is rather like Miss Marple's St. Mary Mead. There, Hastings is reunited with one of the Belgian refugees—M. Hercule Poirot! Soon enough, Emily Cavendish Ingelthorpe is brutally murdered, Inspector Japp appears on the scene, and Poirot and Hastings form their enduring partnership.

With the welcome word that A&E plans to film the Poirot stories DEATH ON THE NILE (previously lensed in 1978), FIVE LITTLE PIGS, and SAD CYPRESS, and with rumors circulating of a new teleseries of Miss Marple mysteries, Agatha Christie's own partnership with her millions of fans promises to endure for some considerable time.



SCREEN AND SCREEN AGAIN

Continued from page 23

hopes of getting him back. Reg knows it couldn't possibly be his child. Dot soon suspects he's seeing another woman, but then comes across pictures of Reg and Pete together. She confronts them and accuses them of acting like "a couple of queers." This puts a damper on Reg and Pete's friendship, but all is soon forgotten as they prepare for an 800-mile motorcycle race to Edinburgh.

Mild by today's standards, *THE LEATHER BOYS* was given an X certificate (no one under 16 admitted) in England due to its considerable homoerotic undercurrents. With the shock value gone, the film holds up as a sensitive and honest portrayal of youth in turmoil. Director Sidney J. Furie presents the material in a realistic fashion, and the three leads are superb at fleshing out their roles, with some of the dialogue improvised.

Kino's letterboxed transfer is slightly cropped on the sides from the original 2.35:1 ratio, but this is only distracting during the end credits. The print exhibits occasional wear and tear, but is free of grain, with sharp images and good contrast. The dialogue is occasionally obscured by the music and effects, which are at a very high level, but overall the sound is fine. The disc also contains the theatrical trailer and excerpts from the original pressbook.

—Ron Morgan

ATTACK OF THE PUPPET PEOPLE MGM Home Entertainment

\$14.95

Who isn't a sucker for movies in which people shrink? Be it *THE DEVIL-DOLL* (1936), *DR. CYCLOPS* (1940), or *THE INCREDIBLE SHRINKING MAN* (1957), it's fun watching actors scampering around oversized props, or looking upward at the ceiling and pretending they're cowering from the sight of gargantuan humans. Of course, cheapo AIP made their contribution to this genre, and the 1958 release, *ATTACK OF THE PUPPET PEOPLE*, stands (ankle-high) as one of the studio's more self-consciously goofy efforts.

John Hoyt stars as Mr. Franz, a seemingly gentle dollmaker who hides a terrible secret and a warped brain. Because his wife left him for an acrobat back when he was a puppeteer, the needy fellow makes sure that no one else in his life will ever desert him. He does this by shrinking them to the size of dolls and keeping them in the sort of canisters suitable for tennis balls. When secretary Sally (June Kenney) and sales rep Bob (John Agar) decide to run off together, they find themselves reduced to Barbie and Ken replicas. Not content to live small, the two lovers rebel and rally four other little people to the cause—Georgia Lane (Laurie Mitchell, whose main claim to fame was playing the scar-faced QUEEN OF OUTER SPACE



opposite Zsa Zsa Gabor in 1958), a good-time gal who takes bubble baths in a coffee can; Mac (Scott Peters), a mailman; and two swingin' teens, Stan (Ken Miller) and Laurie (Marlene Willis).

Aside from seeing a caseful of John Agar dolls, there's nothing terribly scary about *ATTACK* and viewers will be more inclined to have some good-hearted chuckles. The film, in fact, often plays on a cheeky, self-conscious level. When Sally and Bob go to a drive-in, we're treated to a clip from AIP's flip-side, size-enhancement chiller, *THE AMAZING COLOSSAL MAN* (1957), just as Glenn Langan intones on the soundtrack, "I'm not growing . . . you're shrinking!" When Franz makes his little creations dress for a trip, he places a box of "miniature" chocolates between the men and women so they can change clothes with propriety. Unlike Dr. Cyclops, Franz doesn't torture his minuscule charges, but instead pulls out a hi-fi and commands Laurie to sing a Connie Francis-like pop ditty called "You're My Living Doll."

Budget-conscious producer/director Bert I. Gordon lives up to his reputation for amiable cheesiness. The shrunken versions of the actors standing in the canisters don't resemble three-dimensional dolls so much as paper cutouts made from photos; a rat chasing Laurie and Bob is ineptly matted in; and the background shot of the drive-in is neither real nor rear-projection, but a still photo. Somehow, the penny-pinching only adds to the fun.

The DVD consists of a relatively clean print, with an occasional blemish. The extras contain a bogus preview that seems put together by the DVD manufacturers and a list of "Fun Facts" that errs by referring to the drive-in feature as *WAR OF THE COLOSSAL BEAST* (1958). True to AIP form, the film's title is more of a selling point than factual; the only notable attack comes when John Agar throttles a Mr. Hyde marionette, no doubt for upstaging him.

—Barry Monush

TO CATCH A THIEF Paramount Home Video

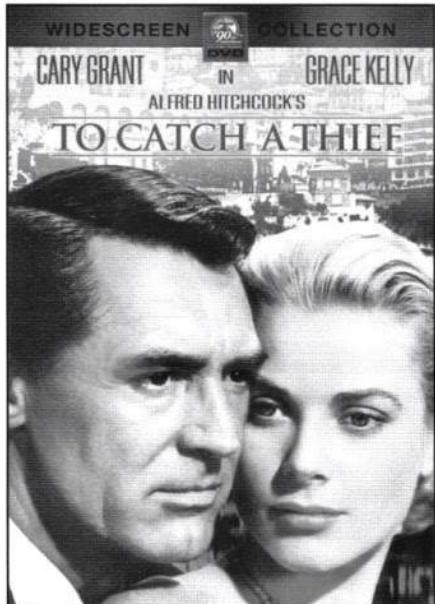
\$24.99

Described by the director's daughter as "a typical Hitchcock movie with everything in it," *TO CATCH A THIEF* (1955), a flavorful romantic caprice with smatterings of suspense, contains all the

Master's trademark elements with little of his characteristic depth. In that respect, it's hardly typical. As much a cinematic experiment as the same year's *THE TROUBLE WITH HARRY*, it's as light as the pastry in a Quiche Lorraine—it's like a VIP tour through Hitchcock's creative mind or a fabulous Hitchcock-themed party where the guests are dressed as his familiar thematic devices (the Wrong Man, the Overbearing Mother, the Icy Blonde, and so on). Nobody's likely to get hurt and a good time is guaranteed to one and all.

Cary Grant plays John Robie, a former jewel thief known as the Cat, trying to clear his name when a copycat criminal begins working the Riviera. Now settled comfortably into middle age and with his best Hitchcock role (1959's *NORTH BY NORTHWEST*) still ahead of him, Grant is required by *THIEF*'s script demands to be sexy and suave and just a little bit naughty—in other words, Cary Grant. The actor fulfills the requirements of his tailor-made role with superstar surety. Grace Kelly completed her three-picture stint as the quintessential "Hitchcock blonde" with *THIEF*. Although Edith Head's costuming makes her look every inch the princess she would soon become (she met Prince Rainier during location filming), the role of a thrill-hungry, newly-moneyed American doesn't flatter her. The romantic interludes with Grant are certainly delightful, but Kelly can do little with the asinine character she is made to assume, and her bratty posturing soon grows tiresome.

It's interesting to compare a scene in *REAR WINDOW*, in which Kelly's lumi-



nous Lisa switches on all the lights in Jimmy Stewart's apartment as if leading him away from the dark and morbid obsessions that have consumed him, to a similar one in *THIEF*, in which, as Francie, she performs the same task in reverse while attempting to seduce Robie into re-

viving his criminal past. Could the actress's transformation from revitalizing golden girl to irresponsible vamp reflect Hitch's personal feelings toward her? Psychoanalytical observations aside (and one cannot discuss Hitchcock without indulging in them), the film is such a stylish, scenic treat in so many ways (the contribution made by the delicious Jessie Royce Landis as Francie's earthy, Molly Brownish mom, stubbing out her cigarette in the yolk of a fried egg, cannot be overemphasized) that Kelly's misbegotten character cannot sabotage it, and it remains one of the director's better (if not one of his best) works.

The DVD print could be cleaner and the accompanying "making of" documentaries are not up to the standards of those appended to Universal's superb Hitchcock packages. Nevertheless, it is an essential addition to one's collection.

—Jon Anthony Carr

THE LOST WORLD

Image Entertainment

\$19.99

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle showed Willis O'Brien's animation test reel for THE LOST WORLD (1925) to the Society of American Magicians, whose president was his friend, Harry Houdini, perhaps to have fun at Houdini's expense. The two held opposing views on spiritualism, and Doyle was coy about how the footage was created. The group's members were so greatly baffled that even *The New York Times* printed a story and another on Doyle's explanation when he finally came clean.

Stop-motion dinosaurs from 1925 will hardly astonish anyone who's seen JURASSIC PARK (1993), although the fact that most of the animation chores were carried out by a single man using comparatively primitive technical means is still quite impressive. Equally impressive is that we now have a version of Harry O. Hoyt's film that is over 90% complete instead of the truncated version that, for years, was thought to be all that existed.

There are claims that a print held by the Eastman House contains still more footage not incorporated into this restoration, and that some of the increased running time is the result of its being transferred at the correct projector speed for the first time. There is certainly more footage before the expedition reaches dinosaur territory. None of the animation footage looks unfamiliar, but thanks to the corrected speed it plays more fluidly.

The film closely follows Conan Doyle's 1912 story of an expedition mounted by Professor Challenger to verify his claims that prehistoric creatures still exist on a South American plateau. The party finds itself trapped there, battling dinosaurs, a malevolent "missing link," and volcanic eruptions, before escaping and returning to London with a full-grown brontosaurus. Not unexpectedly,

the creature escapes and wreaks havoc before swimming down the Thames.

THE LOST WORLD has served as the template for very nearly every Big Beastie On The Loose film that has come since; that the special-effects sequences are almost invariably more interesting than the live-action surrounding them has also followed true to form. One aspect that hasn't been copied is THE LOST



WORLD's naturalistic presentation of its animals as something other than ceaseless menaces. As often as not, they are simply shown placidly chewing their cud; Challenger even notes that the brontosaurus is perfectly harmless "unless it happens to step on us."

After 75 years, THE LOST WORLD is mostly an historical curio, of more interest to fans of Doyle, O'Brien, and stop-motion—hey, come to think of it, that's most of *Scarlet Street*'s readers. Given that this title is unquestionably a niche one, the presentation is deluxe, offering two score options and an audio commentary, two image galleries, and 18 minutes of animation "outtakes" (which look more like tests and flubbed footage than deleted scenes). The restoration has cleaned up the images considerably and they're beautifully tinted, but the movie—like many of its era—shows its age.

—Harry H. Long

LORD OF THE G-STRINGS

EI Cinema

\$19.99

While hardly in the same league as LORD OF THE RINGS (2002), the erotic spoof LORD OF THE G-STRINGS has enough laughs and sex to make it a guilty pleasure worth owning.

In the mythical realm of Diddle-Earth, the warlord General Uptight (Peter Quarry, in a funny, Shakespearean-styled performance) defeats the evil seductress Horspank (Paige Richards) and snatches away not the Ring of Power, but the evil G String. Years later, the wizard Smirnoff (Michael R. Thomas, who steals his every scene with deft comic timing) sends

three Throbbits—Dildo Saggins (Misty Mundae), the none-too-bright Hornee (Darian Caine), and spunky Spam (AJ Khan)—off on a quest to destroy the dangerous undergarment. Along the way, the Throbbits meet evil wizards, warriors, and seductresses—many, many seductresses. There are some surprisingly well-staged battle scenes, some intentionally cartoonish CGI effects, and lots of gags—some of them good, and some of them something else.

EI beauties Ruby Larocca, Barbara Joyce, and Alannah Rhodes put in welcome appearances, along with a newcomer named Juliette Charles, who appears as a nude fairy. Let's see more of Ms. Charles—if possible!

The DVD contains a lot of extras, including behind-the-scenes footage, interviews, and a fun Easter Egg, as well as trailers for other EI Cinema titles. LORD OF THE G-STRINGS is available in both unrated (the version reviewed here) and R-rated versions. The latter version supposedly has alternate scenes and comedy bits not found on the unrated disc.

—Danny Savello

FROM HELL

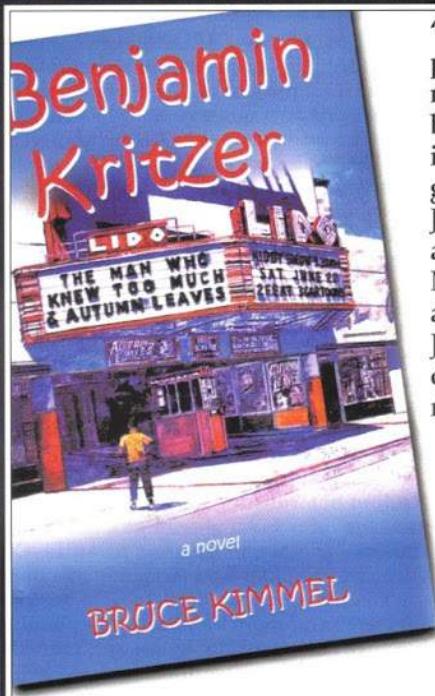
20th Century Fox Home Entertainment

\$19.98

FROM HELL (2001) is pure, unadulterated, flat-out horror filmmaking at its best—and from an unexpected quarter, the Hughes Brothers (Albert and Allen), who are known for a very different type of movie (1993's MENACE II SOCIETY and 1995's DEAD PRESIDENTS). They've approached the Whitechapel of Victorian London much as they would any other ghetto. There's some sense to that, but the real key to the success of the film lies in what sometimes happens when a foreign director takes on a subject not native to him.

The Hughes Brothers' version of the Alan Moore graphic novel never forgets its title. There's scarcely anything like normalcy and rarely a hint of sunlight. The squalor of the slums is unrelenting. The drawing rooms of the rich house disturbing pictures of persons suffering from disfiguring diseases. John Merrick (the Elephant Man) is displayed in order to raise money for a hospital. It's hard to tell morgue and hospital apart. This is no cozy Victorian thriller, but a savage indictment of a corrupt society that spawned Jack the Ripper. Instead of a reassuring Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson, we have the opium-, laudanum-, and absinthe-addicted Inspector Abberline (Johnny Depp, again proving he can play anything), who has psychic visions, and the gruff Sergeant Godly (Robbie Coltrane), who does his best to keep his boss out of trouble.

The setup is largely in keeping with standard Ripper fact and fiction—prostitutes (here, euphemistically referred to as "unfortunate") are being gruesomely murdered and mutilated in London's Whitechapel district. Inspector



"An instant classic, a masterpiece of evocation, a road map of preadolescence and a sharp Polaroid of your heart's fondest memories. BENJAMIN KRITZER recreates the mysterious, bewildering, heart-pounding world of an American boy with images so vivid, pungent and specific it will not be as if you've gone back in time . . . it will be as if you never left. If J.D. Salinger, Jean Shepard, John Knowles and Woody Allen were locked in an elevator for a month with nothing but a thirty-day supply of Nehi Orange Sodas, Oscar Meyer cold-cuts, a giant box of JuJubes and a typewriter, they could not emerge with better than BENJAMIN KRITZER."—Rupert Holmes, Emmy award-winning creator of AMC's *Remember WENN*, Tony and Edgar award-winning of Broadway's *The Mystery of Edwin Drood* and *Accomplice*.

"BENJAMIN KRITZER isn't just the story of a Jewish kid growing up in L.A. in the fifties, it's the story of any kid growing up anywhere, anytime. If you've ever been nine years old and infuriated with your parents and in love for the first time and trying to see where you fit into the world, then you'll find the tale of your own childhood in Bruce Kimmel's funny, moving first novel."—Martyn Bedford, author of *Acts of Revision*, *The Houdini Girl*.



"Behind a thin veil of fiction, Bruce Kimmel's BENJAMIN KRITZER is a bittersweet memoir—funny, painful, and ultimately touching."—Ira Levin, author of *Rosemary's Baby*, *The Stepford Wives*, *The Boys from Brazil*.

Abberline is put on the case and almost immediately runs afoul of his superiors when he discerns that the Ripper must be an educated man and possibly a surgeon. This isn't what they want to hear—they want a lower-class killer.

For a film so utterly bleak—and ultimately downbeat, but not depressing—*FROM HELL* retains a sense of humanity and decency in the characters of Abberline and Godly, and also in, yes, the prostitute with the heart of gold, Mary Kelly (Heather Graham). It's significant that these characters are outside the realm of the society being held accountable.

DVD extras include an audio commentary with the Hughes Brothers, Robbie Coltrane, screenwriter Rafael Yglesias, and photographer Peter Deming; deleted scenes; an alternate ending; and a featurette. There's even a featurette on the uses and abuses of absinthe. By rights, *FROM HELL* should become a classic of the genre in years to come.

—Ken Hanke



LADY JANE Paramount Home Video \$19.99

LADY JANE came and went with little fanfare in 1986, but now Paramount has released it in a beautifully rendered widescreen edition DVD. (It was formerly available as a high-priced standard-frame video from the studio.)

The reign of 16-year-old Lady Jane Grey (who ruled for only nine days) is a tale of political manipulation, fanaticism, and unexpected love. When young King Edward VI (Warren Saire), the only male heir to Henry VIII, dies, the country is in conflict between the new faith of the Church of England and Catholicism. Since Henry's daughters Elizabeth (who doesn't appear) and Mary (Jane Lapotaire) have at various times been condemned as bastards, young Lady Jane (Helena Bonham Carter) falls next in line to the right of succession. With the consent of Jane's parents, Henry and Frances Grey (Patrick Stewart and Sara Kestelman), the ambitious Duke of Northumberland (John Wood) marries his wastrel son, Guilford Dudley (Cary Elwes), to the unwilling young woman. Once wed, Jane and Guilford both discover they want what is best for England, and set about trying to right the country's wrongs. Unfortunately, in their enthusiasm, they quite lose their heads.

Directed with passion and sensitivity by Trevor Nunn, LADY JANE was the first starring vehicle for 20-year-

old Helena Bonham Carter and Cary Elwes. Surrounded by actors of the calibre of Stewart, Wood, Michael Hordern, and Jill Bennett, the young stars shine.



The DVD has scant extras (a photo gallery, a stereo track in French), but the presentation of the film itself is first rate. For lovers of historical films, or for those who simply love tragic romances, LADY JANE is heads above most such efforts.

—Kevin G. Shinnick

LILO & STITCH Disney DVD \$29.99

Disney's LILO & STITCH (2002) is perhaps the most outrageous—and outright hysterical—feature to escape from the



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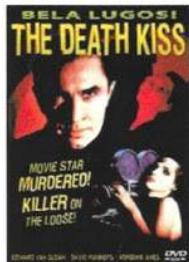
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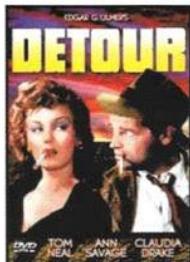
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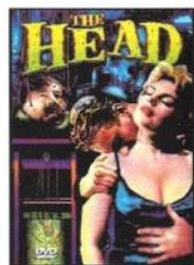
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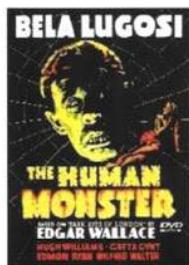
Famous Japanese detective Mr. Moto, a master of disguise (and Ju-Jitsu), uncovers a murder plot of international importance.



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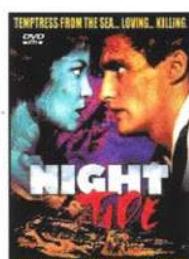
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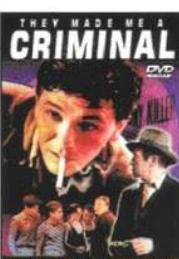
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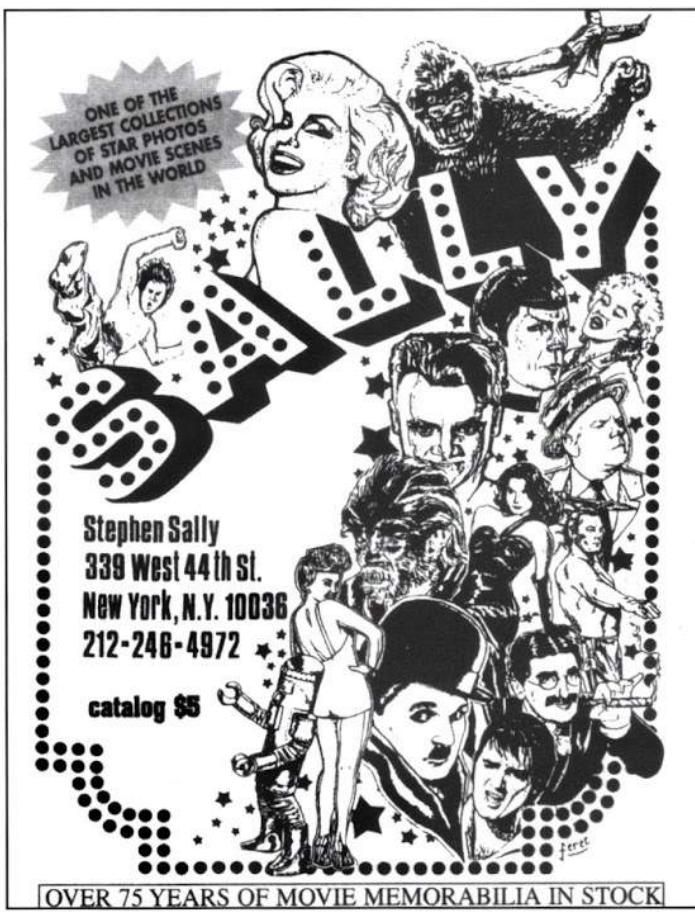


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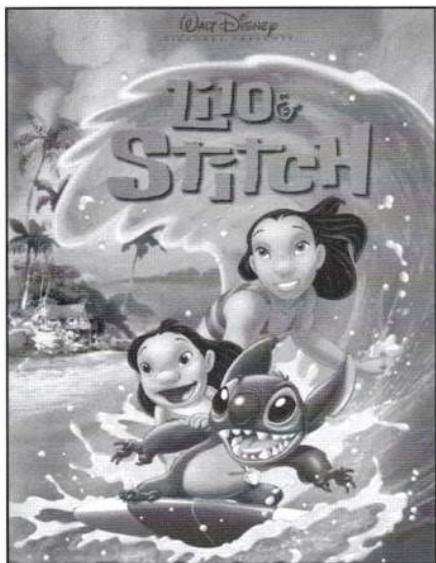
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Magic Kingdom's animation department. The creators have filled each frame with sly sci-fi sight gags, while also paying tribute to previous Disney classics in less-than-subtle fashion. *LILO & STITCH* successfully reimagines standard Disney themes (the outcast, the deparented child, the search for acceptance), into far from standard family fare.

With an intoxicating blend of watercolor backgrounds and an exotic setting, *LILO & STITCH* invites its audience into an alcohol-laced Hawaiian Punch world of Disney, by way of Warner Bros. *LILO & STITCH*, more so than *ALADDIN*



(1992), plays out like an extended Looney Toon. Breathlessly, the picture races through its 89-minute running time, with the sight gags commencing before the film itself even begins.

Though some may call *LILO & STITCH* subversive, even with its stunning blend of traditional storytelling and anime-influenced animation, it remains a Disney film, albeit one with a cutting edge approach to the basic material. Stitch (aka Experiment #626), a genetically engineered alien, is "adopted" by Lilo, an Hawaiian orphan being raised by her older sister. ("This is my family. It's small and broken, but it is good.") Lilo and Stitch are both social outcasts, Stitch having been programmed to destroy anything while creating havoc with his four tiny, blue hands, and Lilo, lacking social skills or friends.

As a pet Stitch is a catastrophe, but his alien intelligence and heart eventually win out over his destructive (and highly humorous) nature. Simple, yes. As simple as the film's major theme: "Ohana." ("Ohana means family. Nobody is forgotten. No one gets left behind.") It is the way that directors Chris Sanders and Dean Dublois innovatively arrive at the film's moving conclusion that makes *LILO & STITCH* not only a family film, but remarkable fare fit for a family.

The DVD features an array of bonus features balanced capably between kid-oriented fare and promotional subjects. Of major interest, and filled with genuine guffahs, is *LILO & STITCH*'s teaser trailers, which showcase Stitch impishly

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interrupting contemporary Disney classics such as *LADY AND THE TRAMP* (1955), *THE LITTLE MERMAID* (1989), *BEAUTY AND THE BEAST* (1991), *ALADDIN*, and *THE LION KING* (1994). *LILO & STITCH* is a wild, irreverent ride as bracing as a Bacardi Bay Breeze, but without the alcoholic after effect.

—Anthony Dale

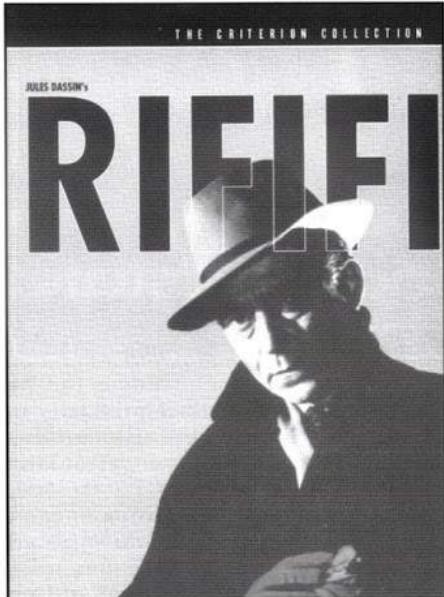
RIFIFI The Criterion Collection \$29.95

"Rififi" is French for "trouble," but it also implies "rough trade" style sex in the song sung by Magali Noel at the Paris gangland hangout "L'Age d'Or," just one of the film's highlights. I mention this in case you were perhaps put off by the title, which can make one think the film is about some guy named Rififi, ala Raffles, or Pepe Le Moko. No, it's nothing so obvious—it's a tight, masterful, brilliant melding of *film noir* styles, directed by expatriate (due to the black-list) *noir*-maestro Jules Dassin.

After refusing to name names, Dassin fled Hollywood for Europe to find work, only to be routed from job after job by threats against the film's future U.S. distribution. Broke, disillusioned, he wandered Europe until the French, perhaps sensing their budding *nouvelle vague*, took him in to direct *RIFIFI* (1956). A more inspired blend of cultural and personal perspectives is impossible to imagine. The picture's moody tale of double-crossing crooks works as a sly commentary and mirror to Dassin's own

experience as a persecuted artist. (He also plays a role in the film, and wrote the screenplay, loosely adapted from a lurid pulp novel by Auguste Le Breton.) The story involves a jewelry store heist and the tragic aftermath. French icon Jean Servais plays "The Stephano," a legendary Paris crook who returns to the streets that no longer revere and fear him, and immediately turns to planning a crime. Dassin plays the Italian safe-cracker hired for the job, and when it later goes awry, his fate is a tragic and eloquent mirror of Dassin's own experience with blacklisting. Before that, however, we're presented with one of the most breathtaking heist scenes ever filmed. Clocking in at over half an hour, there's barely a word whispered as the thieves work in perfect harmony to hatch their crime. The perfection of their efforts is undone, of course, and again the film serves as a mirror to the frustrations of talented artists routinely squashed by the unfeeling bottom liners of the world.

Criterion has done a typically fine job



with this disc. A gorgeous transfer brings out deep blacks, blazing whites, shiny drops of sweat on faces, and reflective puddles in the rainy Paris streets. The Dolby mono sound is jarring at times, the music is very loud when contrasted with the dialogue, but keeping a remote handy should solve this problem. Also, in some sections the syncing seems a split second off. A big plus are great new subtitles, perhaps the best this reviewer has ever encountered. In easy-to-read yellow, the dialogue flows with a poetic yet no-nonsense cadence that would indicate a talented crime novelist may have been hired for the job. ("Sit your moneymaker down," is a memorable translation of one line.) There's also the original English-dubbed soundtrack, production stills, and set design drawings as extras. The highlight extra feature (and Criterion always seems to have one on these medium-priced discs) is an extensive interview with Dassin,

wherein he relates a lot of the horrors of the blacklist era, and his own exploits in getting the picture made. It lends an eloquent, tragic note to this wonderful disc, which offers ample evidence in the case for RIFIFI's consideration as one of the best crime films ever made.

—Erich Kuersten

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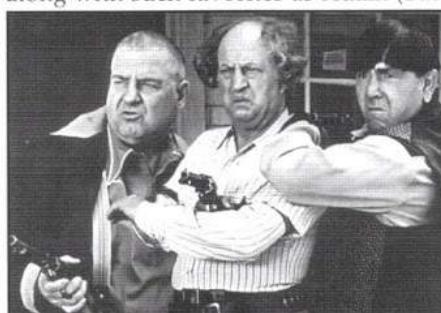
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\$24.95 each

Columbia Tristar Home Entertainment continues to issue DVDs of all-time favorite short subjects starring The Three Stooges—Moe Howard, Larry Fine, Curly Howard, and Shemp Howard.

COPS AND ROBBERS features six classic shorts. CALLING ALL CURS (1939) showcases our heroes as vets caring for a rather expensive poodle named Gargon. The pooch is pinched and it's up to the boys to find him. Will they end up in the doghouse? DISORDER IN THE COURT (1936) stars Moe, Larry, and Curly as star witnesses for a nightclub owner put on trial for murder. It's a hilarious mixture of music, aquatics, and animal antics. In DIZZY DETECTIVES (1943), the Stooges are carpenters who learn they've been accepted into the local police force. (What were they thinking?) Their first case is to find and apprehend the Ape Man who's been terrorizing the city. The result is a madcap game of cat and mouse (or rather, Stooge and monkey) until the bad guys are caught and sent up the river. FLAT FOOT STOOGES (1938) finds our hapless trio as firemen, while CRIME ON THEIR HANDS (1948) has Shemp confusing the Punjab Diamond for an after-dinner mint. WHO DONE IT? (1949) again has Moe, Larry, and Shemp as detectives. Hired by Old Man Goodrich (Stooge regular Emil Sitka), the boys rush over to protect their client, but Goodrich has already been kidnapped. The ensuing antics are the Stooges at their best!

THE OUTLAWS IS COMING (1965) stars Moe, Larry, and Curly Joe DeRita, along with such favorites as Adam (Bart-



man) West, Henry Gibson, Nancy Kovack, and—again—Emil Sitka. Kenneth Cabot (West), the editor of a conservationist magazine, is sent out West with the Stooges by Mr. Abernathy (Sitka), to investigate the disappearance of large herds of buffalo. They uncover a plot by

gunslinger Rance Rodan (Don Lamond) to turn the Native American tribes against the United States Cavalry. With the help of Annie Oakley (Kovack), and a few well-placed cream pies, the good guys insure the safety of all the animals at "Home on the Range." Extras include the classic short GOOFS AND SADDLES (1939), in which Moe, Larry, and Curly are enlisted to wrestle the country back from a vile cattle rustler.

Both DVDs feature digitally mastered high-definition audio and video for clear, crisp quality, subtitles in three languages, and animated and interactive menus.

—Dan Clayton

CRIMES OF PASSION

Anchor Bay Home Entertainment

\$19.98

Kathleen Turner essays an early starring role as Joanna Crane, a chic fashion designer whose inability to form lasting romantic relationships compels her to spend her nights as China Blue, a wisecracking hooker specializing in kinky sex games. John Laughlin plays Bobby, a failed home security expert whose marriage is sinking faster than his business, hired by Joanna's nosy boss to find out how she spends her nights. Bobby is



attracted to and repulsed by Joanna's bizarre double life in equal measure; soon he is embroiled in a steamy affair with her. Matters are further complicated by the presence of the Reverend Peter Shayne (Anthony Perkins), a dangerously unhinged street preacher whose own sexual obsessions become focused on the mysterious China Blue.

The 1984 sex drama CRIMES OF PASSION is one of the most controversial of director Ken Russell's later efforts. On the one hand, the film is an explicit sleazefest, and Russell wallows gloriously in the incessant vulgarity. (A favorite moment of raunchiness occurs when Bobby, surreptitiously snapping photos of China Blue, is accosted by another whore who flashes him while asking, "Hey, baby, how about a shot of the Grand Canyon?" And then there's the scene in which our heroine handcuffs a cop, played by Randall Brady, and sodomizes him with his own nightstick.) On the other hand, few soft-core epics boast such a distinguished cast (Annie Potts and Bruce Davison show

Continued on page 80

THE DISINTEGRATION OF A CANADIAN FAMILY

The Delambres/Brundles in the Films of

The FLY

by Erich Kuersten

In the late 1950s, while American scientists saved the world from giant insects, or turned themselves into prehistoric apes, up in Canada things were different. Montreal-based Dr. Alan Delambre was conducting experiments in disintegration and reintegration of matter, in order to "broadcast" objects and people through space, much the way the cast of the broadcast TV show *STAR TREK* would later beam themselves from starship to planet and back again. Unfortunately, while daring to teleport himself, Dr. Delambre failed to notice a fellow passenger. A fly had gotten into the chamber with him—and the rest is history.

Years later, Delambre's son, Philippe, trying to vindicate his deceased father's legacy, suffered a similar mishap. He was able to reverse the problem, however, and restore himself to human form. Unfortunately, the Delambres wouldn't leave well enough alone, and later continued with the experiments, creating more misery and mutants in their wake. Continually eschewing conventional love and employment, this family of scientists brought hardship and despair on themselves and the non-flying portions of their family. This is their story.

The first film came in 1958, which was unofficially the tail end of the sci-fi heyday. Adapted from a short story by George Langelaan (which debuted in *Playboy* magazine, 1957), *THE FLY* was given an adult treatment by 20th Century Fox. French films such as *AND GOD CREATED WOMAN* (1956) were the adult films at the local art house, but for a big Hollywood studio in 1958, adult cinema meant lush CinemaScope romances, the type with plenty of money, power, implied sex, and veiled references to homosexuality and drug abuse. It was the era of

soap operas produced by Ross Hunter and directed by Douglas Sirk, films that seemed to take place primarily in the heroine's ornate, lavish bedroom, where silk curtains 12 feet tall rustled sensually around windows overlooking the family oil fields. Distraught, sexually frustrated, perhaps alcoholic, the heroine would sooner or later hurl her hairbrush at the mirror and sob, thinking about Rock Hudson.

In *THE FLY*, the hairbrush-tossing focus is not on Hudson, but on an elusive white-headed insect, the proxy for an emotionally unavailable husband down in the basement who won't take off his black velvet hood. Yes, on the one hand it's a conventional sci-fi thriller concerning yet another curious scientist "tampering in God's domain," but on the other it's a woman's film. Helene Delambre relays the flashback that comprises the bulk of the film. Through her eyes, Andre Delambre is less a mad genius than a callous husband who continually avoids her barren boudoir in favor of his mucky experiments. Never outwardly losing her brave face, Helene takes her frustrations out on the maid, the flowers, and her son, Philippe (named Henri in the short story), who will grow into the brooding young man who carries on with the experiments as a way of connecting with his absentee—and long-since swatted—dad.

As the title suggests, there's a small and nagging little buzzing that dominates the whole, frilly scene. From a socially symbolic perspective, we can see it as early as the opening titles. Behind the flashing credits is a painting of a window screen, the impregnable shield of the post-World War II family dream—but in the lower right of the screen, there is one small hole. What is initially just a tiny poke in the staunch fifties social fiber will soon



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THE FLY, like *DIAL M FOR MURDER*, is a talky affair, probably the talkiest classic of the sci-fi era. For a whole 20 minutes, we're treated to the slowly developing realization that Helene Delambre (Patricia Owens) has murdered her husband by crushing his arm and head in a press at the Montreal plant he co-owns with his brother, François (Vincent Price). As scripted by James Clavell, the dialogue and pacing are, for an American film, remarkably British. Plenty of time is allowed for the two distinguished gentlemen, François and Inspector Charas (Herbert Marshall), to muse about how the press level was set for "0"—meaning that it was meant to completely pulverize the head and arm—and that it was pressed not once, but twice. Like Hitchcock's *THE TROUBLE WITH HARRY* (1955), there's something uniquely English in dryly observing horrific events from such a blackly comic "time for tea" distance.

That the tale unfolds in Canada is, in itself, telling. The great northern cousin to the United States, Canada's national identity seems a molecular fusion of American, British, and French culture, a suitable place to loose the fused fly/man. Canada has the British air of civility, the French sense of culture, and the American "let's split the atom!" enthusiasm. On a purely visual level, Americans may think of Canada as "up there," in a sort of mysterious north, floating above the United States like a buzzing cloud over a picnic.

Once the horror of the press is fully digested, François and the inspector head to the Delambre mansion to confront Helene, who seems in a sort of calm, post-traumatic state, refusing to comment about the events, interested only in capturing a white-headed fly. Finally, in order to get to the bottom of the mystery, François lies and tells her he has caught the fly—and ever-so-re-

luctantly, Helene begins the long flashback that will comprise the central section of the film. It's filtered through her Blanche DuBois-like sensibility, and the scent of lady's perfume over the insect proceedings lends the story an uneasy oscillation. The actual horror is smaller than the womanly attributes of the film. It's a femme-friendly drawing-room drama, but with flybefouled cucumber sandwiches.

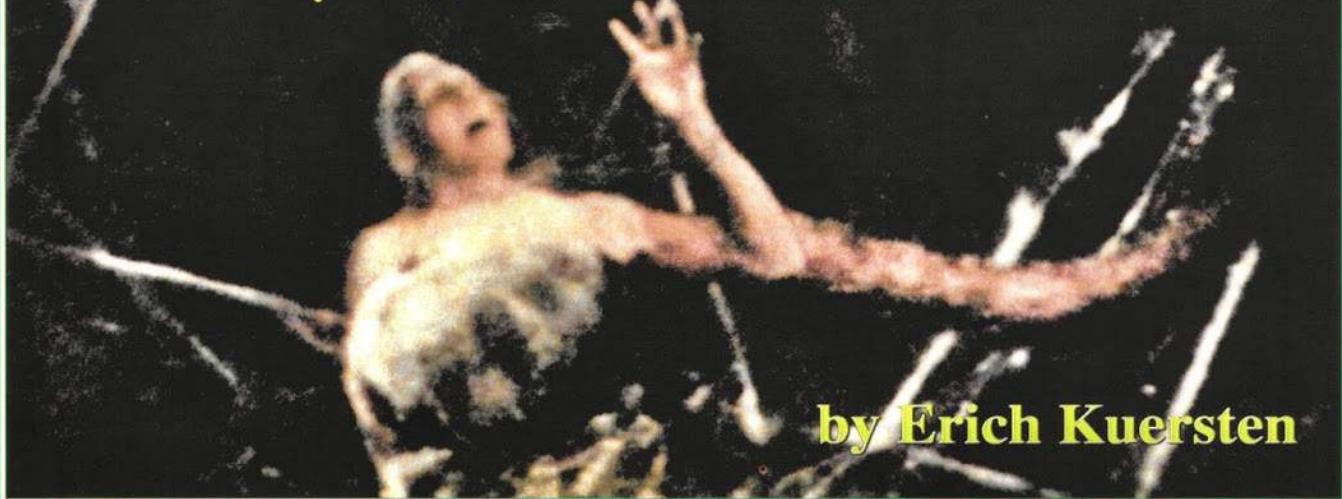
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LEFT: Helene and Andre Delambre (Patricia Owens and David Hedison, the latter billed as Al Hedison) are a typical married couple of the fifties—all smiles on the surface. RIGHT: Away from his wife, in his basement laboratory, Andre leads the secretive life of a research scientist—or an errant husband.

talking to him, trying to be encouraging. It takes her a few seconds to realize he's forgotten she's in the room; then, she silently slinks upstairs, seemingly unaware that there's anything wrong with her being insulted in this manner. Awhile later, Andre again tosses the sanctity of his household to the wind, when he impulsively tries teleporting the family cat. The cat fails to reintegrate and is left a doomed stream of electrons. The result is a Poe-like accusatory yowl that haunts Andre as it whooshes around the room.

Later still, after Andre has successfully disintegrated and reintegrated a guinea pig, he finally rises from the basement to celebrate with Helene. In the next few scenes, we see him calm and contented. "I'm just so happy to be alive," he says. This is another moment rare in sci-fi films. We usually see the scientist struggle to break the laws of God, etc. etc. and then quickly get his cosmic comeuppance, but Clavell's script provides a chance for the doomed explorer to reflect and bask. Sitting out in the sun on a lounge chair, Andre stares placidly up at the heavens. When Helene asks him what he is looking at, he says, "The sky . . . God, perhaps." Andre calls François and invites him to see the great work the following day, little realizing that pride goeth before a fall.

THE FLY embraces the structures not only of a woman's weepy and a sci-fi thriller, but that of a mystery—in



fact, two mysteries. In the opening scenes, François and Inspector Charas try to learn why Helene murdered Andre. In the flashback, we initially skip over the business of Andre foolishly teleporting himself with the fly, so that the puzzle briefly becomes Helene's to solve—namely, what's happened to her husband. With that question, THE FLY's horror element comes fully into force.

The following day, an excited François arrives at the Delambre estate, rushing down to the basement with Helene. "What is it?" he asks. "Flat screen?" (Does he think Andre has invented the Trinitron television set?) Andre won't answer their entreaties, and François leaves. When Helene is finally granted admittance into her husband's laboratory, he has a velvet cloth over his head, and keeps his right hand in his lab-coat pocket. He confesses (via writing on a chalkboard) that he tried the device on himself, and now he has the oversized head and arm of a fly. Meanwhile, there's a fly buzzing around—with his arm and head! This horrific news is compounded by Helene's realization that little Philippe was raving about a white-headed fly he'd caught the day before. Helene, ever the enforcer of prim decorum, forced him to take it outside and let it go. Utterly distraught at this news, Andre smashes the desk.

Throughout the film, the uneasy elements of scientific experimentation (the boy's world of bugs and matter) have

LEFT: Refusing to let his wife see him, Andre demands a bowl of milk laced with honey and instigates a desperate hunt for a strange, white-headed fly. RIGHT: Young Philippe Delambre (Charles Herbert) has already caught the fly once, but let it go—at his mother's insistence.





LEFT: Emma the maid (Kathleen Freeman) is at a loss to explain Helene Delambre's obsession with houseflies, but Philippe eagerly takes part in the search. RIGHT: Helene's well-ordered, wifely existence is thrown into complete chaos by the discovery of Andre's secret.

coexisted uneasily with Helene's curtains and flower-arrangement world of domesticity. The outdoors and the basement is the ordained realm of the men, the upstairs house the women's, kept pretty and ordered, like a tomb. Andre and Helene are both prisoners of this concept of cleanliness, decency, and order. The tragic element of the story springs from Helene's earlier insistence that Philippe release the fly. It's a sad scene, with the boy upset over having to turn loose his prey, but doing so as his mother commands. The command itself is thoughtlessly petty and senseless; order and cleanliness for order and cleanliness' sake, nothing more. It's this devotion to mom's pointless rules of conduct—maintaining decorum for no real reason at all—that spells not only Philippe's undoing as a man in *THE FLY*'s two sequels, but also the undoing of his father, a sort of joint emasculation by the castrating feminine.

For his part, Andre is equally to blame for this family tragedy. If he had come to Helene sooner with his fly-head problem, it would have been fixed—but his pride forbade it, just as her pride forbade Philippe from keeping the fly that would have resolved the matter. They have built a mutually agreed upon prison of propriety and cleanliness. The man remains absent because he is resentful of his wife's quietly overbearing nature, yet her overbearing nature is a result of his absence.

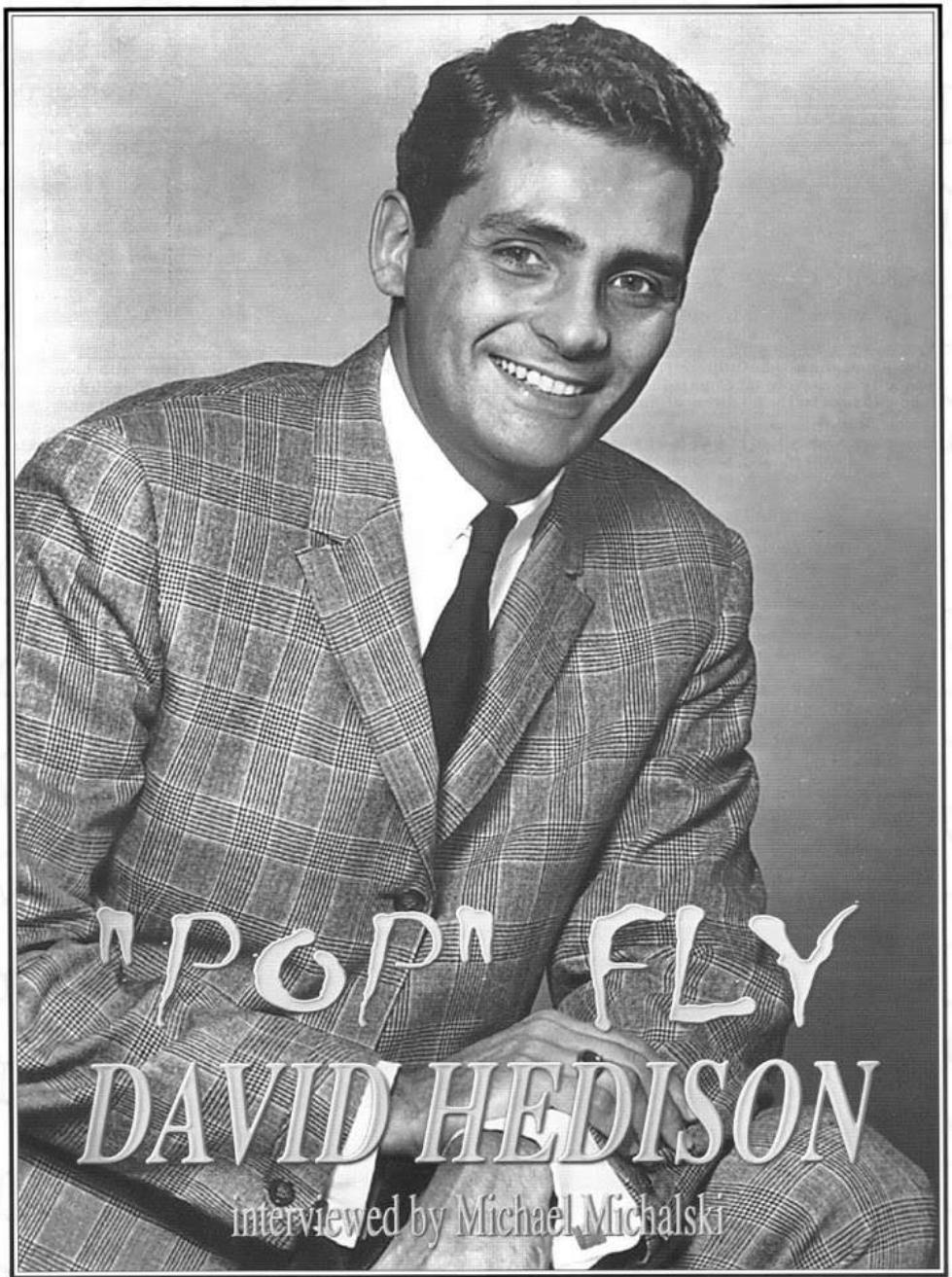
LEFT: In the fifties, a husband with a secret was often doomed—but rarely did he end it all by having his wife crush him to pulp in an hydraulic press. RIGHT: Her husband dead, Helene peacefully dreams of a life without duplicitous husbands and their troublesome flies.



In her book *Purity and Danger, An Analysis of the Concepts of Pollution and Taboo* (Routledge, 1984), Mary Douglas discusses the importance of disorder in an organized society. Society seeks to establish patterns, but disorder provides the material from which order comes. Magic ritual (or disintegration experiments) provides the power to lift society out of its stagnation, but until that power is reintegrated into the fabric of society via ritual, it is highly dangerous. Helene is the keeper of the stagnant social order, with no concept of how to reintegrate the power that Andre's "mystic journeys" have brought forth. Most married couples don't even have the words to relay this stuff; they have to go to counselors to learn the words. To stress this point, Andre is totally unable to even speak in his fly form. He must write his words on the chalkboard, in a scrawl that grows progressively more childlike. Helene, realizing that she needs to reintegrate him via ritual, tries vainly to find the white-headed fly, the last shred of abject still drifting through her otherwise sterile world. Calling Emma and Philippe to help capture the insect as it buzzes madly around the room, she seems to be trying to relearn how to play children's games, or to establish a sacred space where boy and servant can work towards a common goal. Her

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From a very early age, Albert David Hedison Jr. knew he wanted to be an actor, and—unlike many—he succeeded in making his dream come true—first as Al Hedison, and then as David Hedison. Born in Providence, Rhode Island, in 1927, the young Hedison was expected to go into the family jewelry business, but stuck to his guns and finally found his way to New York and the bustling theater world of the late forties and early fifties.

Here, in an exclusive interview with *Scarlet Street*, David Hedison recalls his busy life as an actor, starting from the moment the acting bug (no, not a fly) first bit him . . .

David Hedison: It happened in Providence. I was about 11, and my cousin and I went to the movies and saw Tyrone Power in *BLOOD AND SAND*. I was just so captivated by the beauty of Rita Hayworth and the whole romance and passion of that film, that I begged my cousin to see it a second time, which we did. From that time on, I felt I wanted to be an actor. In high school, I appeared in the senior play, and then I knew it would be a reality, because I felt comfortable on the stage; I was getting away from myself. The play was called *WHAT A LIFE*.

Scarlet Street: The play that introduced the character of Henry Aldrich.

DH: I played the principal, Mr. Bradley, and I thought I did a *very* good impression of a high school principal. (Laughs) I felt good doing it, very comfortable on the stage. I found, as I was rehearsing it, that I was becoming more and more creative. I said, "I think this is what I want to do."

SS: Were your parents supportive?

DH: Well, my parents thought it was just a childhood fantasy. I was the only child and my father was in the jewelry business. At the time, in the forties, there was a lot of jewelry in Providence, enameling shops and all that sort of thing. He wanted me to take over his business, which was called A. Hedison Enameling Company. I didn't want to do it; I was bored with that sort of thing. I had found greener fields and I just wanted to pursue my acting. My father couldn't understand it, because he didn't know anyone in the business who could help me. My mother was a bit more encouraging, but she still had a tough time with it.

SS: And then you were drafted.

DH: I went into the Navy. The war was over, and I went down to Jacksonville, Florida. Nothing much was happening, except they were discharging people. I was working at a separation center, but I looked in the newspaper and I found a little theater. It was called The Jacksonville Theater Group, an amateur theater group. I took two busses to get there, and I became transfixed with the sort of plays they were doing. I'd go there as often as I could and get a bit part.

I did a play called *A BELL FOR ADANO*, which Fredric March had done on Broadway, and I had a small part in

Philip Barry's *THE PHILADELPHIA STORY*. I was very excited about going there. The only problem was that, being in the Navy, we were put on watch. Every time I got the watches from four o'clock to eight, which was the best watch, I'd go running to someone who had midnight to four or four to eight in the morning and trade. They said, "Oh, this guy is nuts!" (Laughs) That way, I was able to go to the theater. I learned a lot in that theater. I never got a lead, but I learned and then, when I went back home, my father wanted me to go to school and I wanted to go to New York immediately and start work as an actor. He didn't think that was such a good idea. So I took a test at Harvard University and passed and got into Brown University. I went to Brown



David Hedison had his hair grayed for *THE FLY* (1958) when 20th Century Fox decreed he was too young to play a scientist.

and, again, learned a lot about acting. There was a wonderful professor called Ben Brown, who was head of The Stock and Buskin Players. I played bit parts again, and then small parts and leads. I was paying more attention to that than I was to my studies. I had a public speaking course and I failed in that. I just never felt comfortable with myself, with looking at an audience as myself, because I really didn't know who I was. I was always comfortable being somebody else. I was always relaxed when I took on a role.

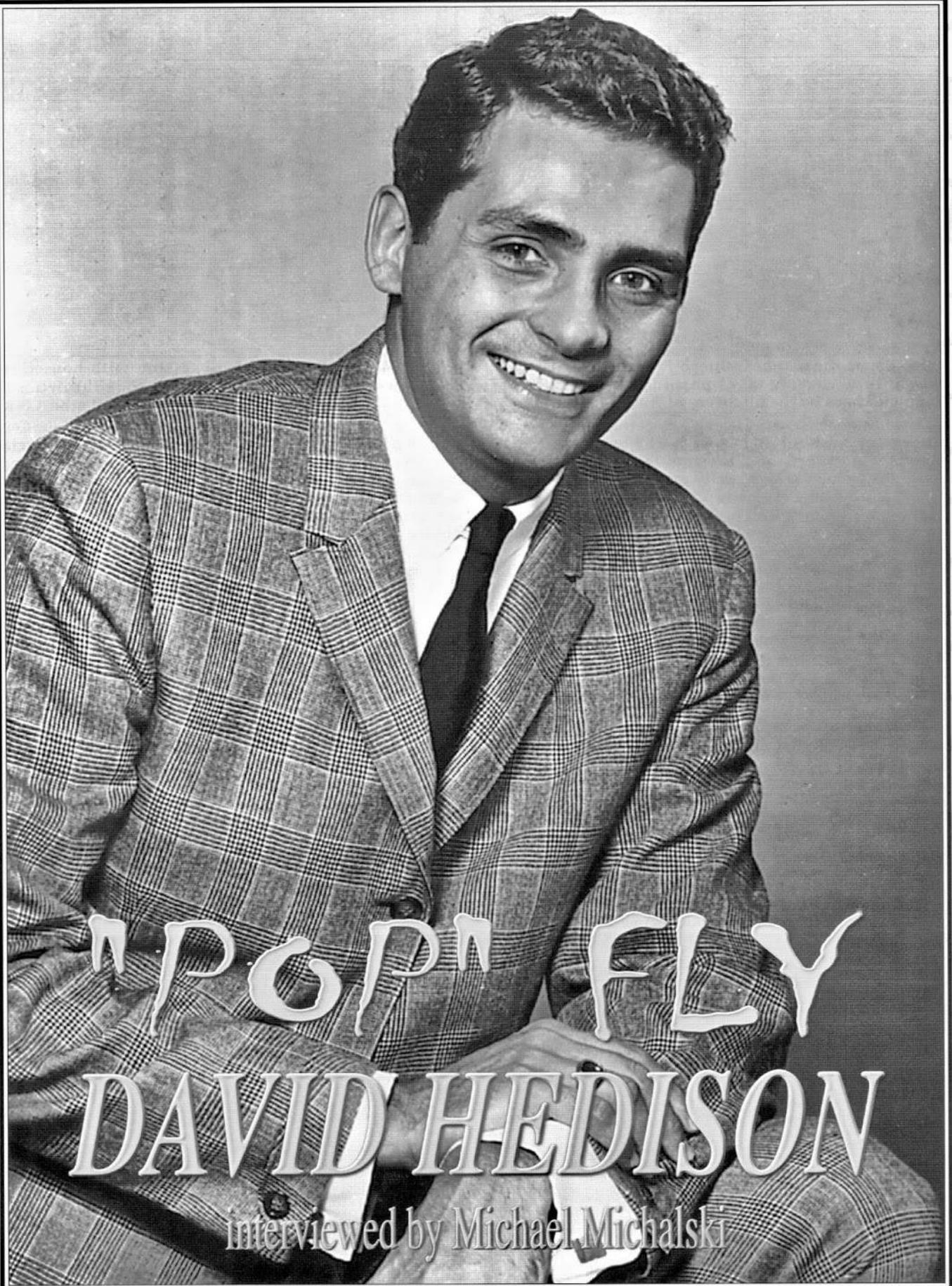
SS: So you left college.

DH: Well, I left after two and a half years. I literally flunked out, because my grades were so low. I really wanted to go to New York. I got a job as a Fuller Brush man. I went from door to door and made some money and was able to save up about \$1,000—and then off I went to New York. I met with Sandy Meyers, who was the acting coach at the Neighborhood Playhouse, and the

next thing I knew I was accepted. I found a room on East 50th Street for \$5.00 a week. A week! I had a little room and it had a little sink in it, and the bathroom was on the floor above me. Between you and me, I always pissed in the sink. (Laughs) And then I'd wash it out. The paint was all peeling and there were cockroaches, but when you're young and have a dream, nothing gets in your way. I had a wonderful year at the Playhouse and then I left for a while and got a job in the Waldorf-Astoria, taking care of the entertainment who came in to work in the Empire Room. I'd keep all the props and everything. I'd make sure that all the candles were lit on all the tables, make that the tables were all clean, and then I'd help clean the silverware. They didn't know what to call me on the time card, so they put "candle boy." (Laughs) And that was my name! I made a little more money and then I went back to the Neighborhood Playhouse the following year, and I graduated in 1953. I made the rounds and took my pictures and credits to all the agents, and no one was interested. I decided to get some more training, so I studied with Uta Hagen at the Herbert Berghof School. I was there for a couple of years. I got some bit parts on television on *KRAFT TELEVISION THEATER* and *STUDIO ONE*, and I'd go off to do summer stock at The White Barn Theater in Irwin, Pennsylvania, which was just outside of Pittsburgh. I did 12 parts in 14 weeks! I was the juvenile, and the leading woman was Colleen Dewhurst. We had a wonderful time! I would be absolutely wonderful in some plays and absolutely terrible in others. (Laughs) It was the hardest work I've ever done, really. I learned a great deal.

SS: You were also quite a letter writer back then, weren't you?

DH: Oh, yes, I was! I wrote John Ford a letter, because I was very impressed with his stuff. I remember seeing a Ford film called *THE INFORMER*, and then another called *THE FUGITIVE*. When I wrote the letter, I was still in the Navy. I told him how wonderful I thought he was and how much I loved *THE INFORMER*, which got an Academy Award, but that I thought *THE FUGITIVE* was much better film. And I told him why and sent him a picture of myself with my hat sort of cocked on the back of my head. I asked him if he could possibly give me a job when I got out of the Navy. He sent me a lovely letter and said that, if I ever got out to Hollywood, "We'll see what we can do. Very sincerely, John Ford." And then he said, "P.S. Next time you send your picture to an ex-Navy four-striper, be sure you square your hat, sailor!" (Laughs) I wrote letters to Bette Davis, James Cagney, and all the people that I really liked. I saw Joseph Cotten in *SHADOW OF A DOUBT* and I thought, "God, I'd love to play a part like that!" I wrote him a letter, but I got no reply. Some wrote back and some didn't.



"POP" FLY DAVID HEDISON

interviewed by Michael Michalski

From a very early age, Albert David Hedison Jr. knew he wanted to be an actor, and—unlike many—he succeeded in making his dream come true—first as Al Hedison, and then as David Hedison. Born in Providence, Rhode Island, in 1927, the young Hedison was expected to go into the family jewelry business, but stuck to his guns and finally found his way to New York and the bustling theater world of the late forties and early fifties.

Here, in an exclusive interview with *Scarlet Street*, David Hedison recalls his busy life as an actor, starting from the moment the acting bug (no, not a fly) first bit him . . .

David Hedison: It happened in Providence. I was about 11, and my cousin and I went to the movies and saw Tyrone Power in *BLOOD AND SAND*. I was just so captivated by the beauty of Rita Hayworth and the whole romance and passion of that film, that I begged my cousin to see it a second time, which we did. From that time on, I felt I wanted to be an actor. In high school, I appeared in the senior play, and then I knew it would be a reality, because I felt comfortable on the stage; I was getting away from myself. The play was called *WHAT A LIFE*.

Scarlet Street: The play that introduced the character of Henry Aldrich.

DH: I played the principal, Mr. Bradley, and I thought I did a very good impression of a high school principal. (Laughs) I felt good doing it, very comfortable on the stage. I found, as I was rehearsing it, that I was becoming more and more creative. I said, "I think this is what I want to do."

SS: Were your parents supportive?

DH: Well, my parents thought it was just a childhood fantasy. I was the only child and my father was in the jewelry business. At the time, in the forties, there was a lot of jewelry in Providence, enameling shops and all that sort of thing. He wanted me to take over his business, which was called A. Hedison Enameling Company. I didn't want to do it; I was bored with that sort of thing. I had found greener fields and I just wanted to pursue my acting. My father couldn't understand it, because he didn't know anyone in the business who could help me. My mother was a bit more encouraging, but she still had a tough time with it.

SS: And then you were drafted.

DH: I went into the Navy. The war was over, and I went down to Jacksonville, Florida. Nothing much was happening, except they were discharging people. I was working at a separation center, but I looked in the newspaper and I found a little theater. It was called The Jacksonville Theater Group, an amateur theater group. I took two busses to get there, and I became transfixed with the sort of plays they were doing. I'd go there as often as I could and get a bit part. I did a play called *A BELL FOR ADANO*, which Fredric March had done on Broadway, and I had a small part in

Philip Barry's *THE PHILADELPHIA STORY*. I was very excited about going there. The only problem was that, being in the Navy, we were put on watch. Every time I got the watches from four o'clock to eight, which was the best watch, I'd go running to someone who had midnight to four or four to eight in the morning and trade. They said, "Oh, this guy is nuts!" (Laughs) That way, I was able to go to the theater. I learned a lot in that theater. I never got a lead, but I learned and then, when I went back home, my father wanted me to go to school and I wanted to go to New York immediately and start work as an actor. He didn't think that was such a good idea. So I took a test at Harvard University and passed and got into Brown University. I went to Brown



David Hedison had his hair grayed for *THE FLY* (1958) when 20th Century Fox decreed he was too young to play a scientist.

and, again, learned a lot about acting. There was a wonderful professor called Ben Brown, who was head of The Sock and Buskin Players. I played bit parts again, and then small parts and leads. I was paying more attention to that than I was to my studies. I had a public speaking course and I failed in that. I just never felt comfortable with myself, with looking at an audience as myself, because I really didn't know who I was. I was always comfortable being somebody else. I was always relaxed when I took on a role.

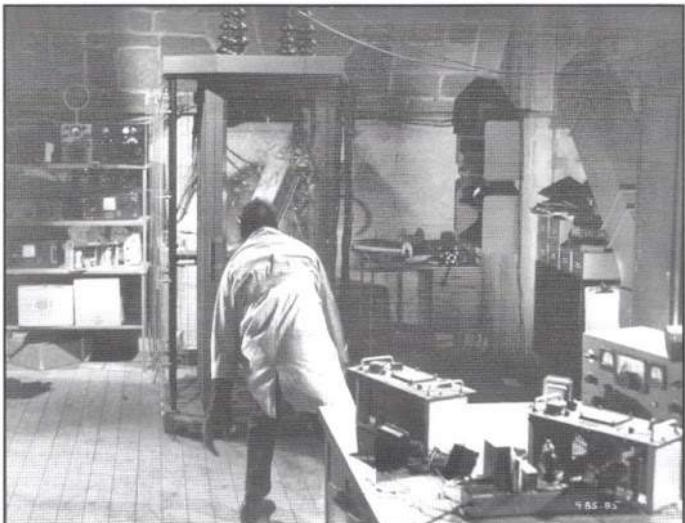
SS: So you left college.

DH: Well, I left after two and a half years. I literally flunked out, because my grades were so low. I really wanted to go to New York. I got a job as a Fuller Brush man. I went from door to door and made some money and was able to save up about \$1,000—and then off I went to New York. I met with Sandy Meyers, who was the acting coach at the Neighborhood Playhouse, and the

next thing I knew I was accepted. I found a room on East 50th Street for \$5.00 a week. A week! I had a little room and it had a little sink in it, and the bathroom was on the floor above me. Between you and me, I always pissed in the sink. (Laughs) And then I'd wash it out. The paint was all peeling and there were cockroaches, but when you're young and have a dream, nothing gets in your way. I had a wonderful year at the Playhouse and then I left for a while and got a job in the Waldorf-Astoria, taking care of the entertainment who came in to work in the Empire Room. I'd keep all the props and everything. I'd make sure that all the candles were lit on all the tables, make that the tables were all clean, and then I'd help clean the silverware. They didn't know what to call me on the time card, so they put "candle boy." (Laughs) And that was my name! I made a little more money and then I went back to the Neighborhood Playhouse the following year, and I graduated in 1953. I made the rounds and took my pictures and credits to all the agents, and no one was interested. I decided to get some more training, so I studied with Uta Hagen at the Herbert Berghof School. I was there for a couple of years. I got some bit parts on television on *KRAFT TELEVISION THEATER* and *STUDIO ONE*, and I'd go off to do summer stock at The White Barn Theater in Irwin, Pennsylvania, which was just outside of Pittsburgh. I did 12 parts in 14 weeks! I was the juvenile, and the leading woman was Colleen Dewhurst. We had a wonderful time! I would be absolutely wonderful in some plays and absolutely terrible in others. (Laughs) It was the hardest work I've ever done, really. I learned a great deal.

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Such are actors' egos that very few wanted the title role in *THE FLY* (1958), but David Hedison (billed as Al Hedison) was an exception. He spent one third of the film's running time with a black cloth draped over his head (LEFT, pictured with Patricia Owens) and another third in a fly mask (RIGHT). Here, Andre wanders his laboratory as the fly's brain increasingly gains control of his human form.

SS: You won a number of theater awards, didn't you?

DH: There was the Barter Theater Award in 1951. They'd give the award to the best performance of the year by a Broadway star, then the winner picked an up-and-coming boy and girl to go to the Barter Theater in Virginia to continue their training. Well, the year that I won, Fredric March was the winner for *THE AUTUMN GARDEN*, by Lillian Hellman. There were about 300 applicants, and my number was 116. I remember waiting in a long line and finally being allowed backstage. Number 112 was on the stage and I lost my courage; I walked out the door; I left. I walked down to the street corner and I thought, "You can't do this! You want to be an actor and you don't believe in yourself. Go back there, do it; what the hell is the matter with you?" So I went back, went through the stage door, and 115 was now onstage. Then

they called me. I did a scene from *PARIS BOUND* by Philip Barry, and that was it. They called me back and there were 10 finalists. I did another scene. It was for one minute, but you'd be amazed at how long one minute is. In the old days, it used to be five minutes. Then when Ethel Barrymore won for *THE CORN IS GREEN*, she cut it down to one minute. She said, "You don't have to taste a whole glass of milk to know it's sour!" (Laughs) So I did my audition and I won! Fritz Weaver was the runner-up and the girl was Rosemary Murphy, who's done a lot of wonderful stuff on Broadway.

SS: Then there was the Theater World Award for a play directed by Sir Michael Redgrave.

DH: Michael Redgrave—he wasn't a Sir, then—was doing a play in 1956 called *A MONTH IN THE COUNTRY*. Uta Hagen was starring in it with Luther Adler, and they needed someone to play the young tutor. I met with Mr. Redgrave, and he

said, "I suppose you don't know the play? Why don't you take a copy and come back later this afternoon?" So I went back to my room and read the play, and I thought to myself, "It's a very serious scene, but I think it has comedic values." I went back to Mr. Redgrave and we did the scene, and I could tell he liked it. He gave me a little note and we did the scene again and I followed his note completely. He slapped his knee and turned to the producer, T. Edward Hambleton and said, "That's it! That's it!" Well, Hambleton was furious because he wanted to be the decision maker.

SS: Redgrave was stepping on his toes.

DH: So, that evening I had dinner with a casting person named Ann Howard. We went back to her apartment for a drink and I checked my service. He said, "The Phoenix Theater called and you got the part. Pick up the script." I said, "What!" He said, "The Phoenix Theater

LEFT: Following *THE FLY*, Hedison worked for producer Irwin Allen in *THE LOST WORLD* (1960). Among his costars were Claude Rains, Fernando Lamas, and Jill St. John. **RIGHT:** Hedison was reunited with *FLY* costar Vincent Price (in the role of a deranged puppet master) for an episode of Allen's *VOYAGE TO THE BOTTOM OF THE SEA*. They're pictured with Richard Basehart. PAGE 39: Hedison poses with onscreen *FLY* wife Patricia Owens.



"They'd give the award to the best performance of the year by a Broadway star, then the winner picked an up-and-coming boy and girl to go to the Batter Theater in Virginia to continue their training. I did a scene. It was for one minute, but you'd be amazed at how long one minute is. In the old days, it used to be five minutes. Then when Ethel Barrymore won for THE CORN IS GREEN, she cut it down to one minute. She said, 'You don't have to taste a whole glass of milk to know it's sour!'"

called and you got the part. Pick up the script." And I said, "What?" "Al," he said, "You . . . got . . . the . . . part . . . pick . . . up . . . the . . . script!" (Laughs) I was delirious. I said to Ann, "Please forgive me, but I have to be on my own" I didn't know what I was doing! I started walking up Third Avenue under the El, and the trains were going by and I remember collapsing at 53rd Street. I sat on the sidewalk, on the curb, and started bawling and crying. I kept saying things like, "Oh, God, thank you!" and all that nonsense. After all those years of trying—finally, something was breaking! I called my mother and told her, and the first thing she said was, "Oh, my, that's wonderful! Is that on television, dear?" (Laughs) 'Cause that's all she thought was important. I said, "No, mother, this is more important than television!" So there it was. I did it and won a Theater World Award, and once that happened the telephone started ringing. Agents wanted to sign me, and people wanted to meet me.

SS: Is that when you got your Twentieth Century Fox contract?

DH: Exactly. It was just around that time. Charles Feldman, who was the head of the Famous Artist Agency, brought me to Hollywood and got me a contract at Twentieth Century Fox. At the time, it seemed like a great deal; it was an exclusive contract and I was all hot and ready to go. Looking back on it, now, I realize it was a great mistake, because they owned me completely. We always look back on our lives and realize things we did wrong. If I'd been smart, I would have stayed in New York at least a year or two longer, done more theater, and perfected my craft—and that would have made me much more worthwhile in Hollywood. Then I could have gotten a picture deal, but all during the time that I was under exclusive contract, I did the films that I was instructed to do, thinking that was the thing to do. I did terrible films! I'd get calls from Joe Papp, who was a director at the Neighborhood Playhouse, and he'd say it would be a wonderful idea if I could come to New York and do HENRY V in the park. And of course, the studio wouldn't let me go. They'd say, "No, we've got this film that you have to do," and blah, blah, blah. Theater meant nothing to them. And I think to myself, again, that I still could have gone; I could have said, "Well, I'm going." All they would have done was put me on suspension. I don't know why I didn't go; maybe I was weak. It was just a major mistake on

my part. I really did a lot of stupid things, but there we are!

SS: Your first time in front of a film camera was for THE ENEMY BELOW, directed by Dick Powell.

DH: It was very difficult for me, 'cause I didn't have that film technique. There were certain scenes that I thought could have been much, much better, but of all the films I've done, I think it's the best I've ever made. Unfortunately, I think, the most popular is THE FLY. And then, of course, there's THE VOYAGE TO THE BOTTOM OF THE SEA.

SS: What kind of director was Powell?

DH: He was a wonderful director! He was very patient and lots of fun, very relaxed on the set. Everyone liked him a lot. Being an actor, he was able to deal with other actors. He had a great rapport with Robert Mitchum; he always called him "Mitch." I enjoyed him very much.

SS: Does it bother you that people remember you mostly for THE FLY?

DH: Well, no, it doesn't bother me, not at all. It's funny, because I had a call about a month ago from Gary Cooper's daughter, Maria. She said, "David, I just saw THE ENEMY BELOW on AMC and it was just such a wonderful film!" She just went on and on and on about it, and she had never seen it before. A lot of people haven't seen it. But everyone's seen THE FLY. "Help me! Help me!" (Laughs) It was very popular and, of course, it was done very well—although I've always felt it could have been a better picture than it was.

SS: Tell us about getting involved with THE FLY, and the hopes you had for the film.

DH: First of all, I didn't realize I was up for the part. I had read the short story in Playboy, and I thought, "Oh, my God, what a great story! It would make a wonderful film!" Then Fox got the rights and evidently offered it to Rick Jason, who turned it down because he wanted to play the Vincent Price part. Vincent was already cast. Rick Jason didn't want to do it, because he wouldn't be in a third of the movie and then, for another third, he'd have a black cloth on his head. When I read the script, I got terribly excited. I was second in line and I grabbed it! I went to Buddy Adler, who was head of production, and I said, "This is gonna be a very important

film; it's going to do very, very well! I really feel strongly that, when the girl finally pulls that black cloth off his head, it would be much more exciting and horrific if you didn't see a mask. Instead, it should be partly my face and partly the fly. It should be a progressive makeup, gradually getting worse and worse. Maybe my left eye is still there, or part of my mouth, but the whole thing shouldn't be the fly." It would have made the love story much stronger, and it could have been very exciting! "Oh, well," Buddy said, "we've already got Ben Nye doing the mask." Ben Nye was head of makeup, so I went running to Ben and told him my idea. He said, "No, no—Buddy's given the okay to do the mask. Besides, you don't want to get up at three in the morning, do you, to come into makeup?" And I said, "Yes!" (Laughs) "Yes, of course, it will be very, very exciting!" But it didn't happen, and I had to wear the mask. It was very disappointing.

SS: Any other disappointments?

DH: Of course, I could be wrong on all this, but the other thing was when they put me in the web with the spider coming towards me. Now, if you were in that situation, you'd be screaming like crazy. I went through all the emotions from A

Continued on page 78



Young Charles Hand was just another teenage page at the CBS Studio in Burbank, California, when he was signed to a Universal Studios stock contract in 1953. Charles became Brett, Hand was altered to Halsey, and a career was born. Although it would lead him away from Hollywood to the fantastic world of Italian cinema, Halsey eventually found his way back to the States for several other TV and film roles.

Fondly remembered by horror and sci-fi fans for his roles in *REVENGE OF THE CREATURE* (1955, chronicled in *Scarlet Street* #46), *RETURN OF THE FLY* (1959), *THE ATOMIC SUBMARINE* (1959), and *TWICE TOLD TALES* (1963), Brett Halsey is now a busy professor of theater at the University of Costa Rica. Here, he recalls his roles in several JD drive-in classics and his encounter with the curse of the Delambre family

Scarlet Street: Following *REVENGE OF THE CREATURE*, you began appearing in a series of what are termed juvenile delinquent films such as *HOT ROD RUMBLE*, *CRY BABY KILLER*, *HIGH SCHOOL HELLCATS*, *SPEED CRAZY*, and *THE GIRL IN LOVER'S LANE*.

Brett Halsey: They were certainly popular, otherwise they wouldn't have continued making so many of them. That was about the time of James Dean and juvenile rebellion—at least in cinema. We were all rebels without a cause in those days. (Laughs) I don't think it was a social movement as much as a financial choice made by the producers—"People are going to see these pictures, so let's make them." I don't think these filmmakers were *into* social issues, any of them. It was just, "We're on a roll, let's stay on it." That kind of thinking continued later in my career, when I went to Italy and did what they call "cape and sword" pictures. It was the fad of the moment. It was the same sort of thing with James Bond and westerns. But I don't think the JDs had any social significance, at least to those of us making them. Maybe people have written something into them later.

SS: Were they essentially played as morality tales?

BH: Oh, yes. Good always won out in the end—one way or the other. (Laughs)

SS: They were exploitation pics. The producers sensationalized these drag racing, violence, teen pregnancy, and gangs to attract viewers with the lurid subject matter, while at the same time condemning the so-called evil of these situations.

BH: Oh, sure! They had to sanitize it somehow, otherwise they wouldn't be allowed to show them. The good guys always won in the end.

SS: How quickly were these films shot?

BH: Ten days was a long schedule. We felt we were almost doing an A picture if we got 10 days. They'd be eight or nine days, usually. They were real quickies. I learned a lot about how to make pictures economically. I don't know why they can't do it today. Everything was there—all the necessary shots were included. We worked long, hard hours,



FLY BOY BRETT HALSEY

interviewed by Michael Michalski

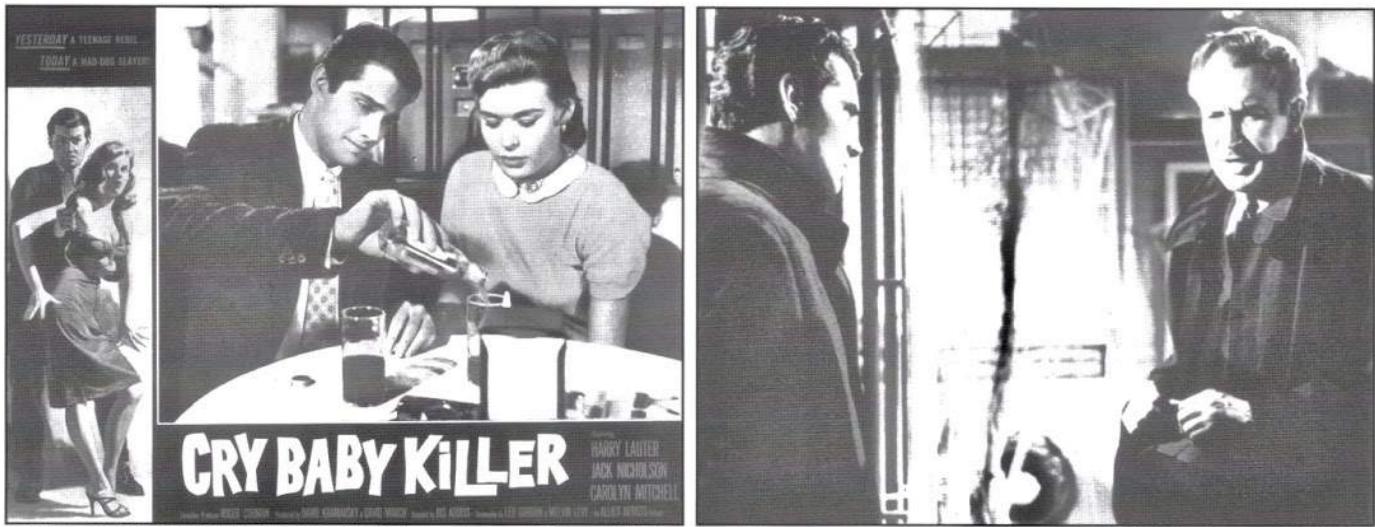
but they work long, hard hours, now. They had a union so people weren't being terribly taken advantage of; they didn't have the non-unions things like they have, now, where you go to work and just stay there forever.

SS: *CRY BABY KILLER* marked the film debut of Jack Nicholson.

BH: My first impression of Jack was that he was very intense, and into his role. I, of course, liked him, and was very comfortable working with him.

SS: Did you and Nicholson do your own fighting? Given his limited experience, were you concerned that something might go wrong?

BH: I don't remember that concern over the safety of our fighting was much of an issue. We were both young, agile, and didn't worry too much about such things. However, as I recall, we did have stuntmen on set just in case. At the time, I didn't think of Jack as an actor in any comparative way. Like the rest of



LEFT: CRY BABY KILLER (1958) costarred Brett Halsey with a newcomer to films—Jack Nicholson. RIGHT: François Delambre (Vincent Price) does his best to dissuade nephew Philippe (Halsey) from indulging in experiments that will result in the RETURN OF THE FLY (1959).

us, he was just another struggling young actor doing his best with what we had to work with. While I may have had more experience than Jack, I never thought of him as anything other than a very competent equal. Now, he's grown into the superstar we all admire and respect.

SS: Do you ever see him?

BH: During one of my visits to Los Angeles, a few years ago, we ran into each other at a Lakers game. We spent some time alone together comparing notes and reminiscing about old times.

SS: Did you enjoy playing the psychotic hot-rodder in SPEED CRAZY? Normally, you weren't the bad guy, but usually the romantic lead or the lead actor's sidekick.

BH: Actually, I played a few bad guys in those early years. My character in THE GIRL IN LOVERS' LANE was also of a questionable sort, although he wasn't as bad as some of the townsfolk thought. Bad guys are more interesting to play, as they initiate action, as opposed to the good guys who usually only react to what the bad guys have done.

SS: HIGH SCHOOL HELLCATS was a film about a gang of bad girls. Most of the fifties

JD flicks were about bad boys, so the female slant was unusual.

BH: It was interesting in that they were careful not to make the girls as bad as bad boys had been portrayed. What was more important to me was to expand my repertoire and to have a good cast. It was shot in about eight days, so it was important to work with good people.

SS: Tell us about HIGH SCHOOL HELLCATS director Edward Bernd, a veteran of 28 Three Stooges short films?

BH: I really liked him. He was efficient and calm and collected. I couldn't understand why he wasn't doing A pictures. He was certainly capable. I think he got stuck in the Bs because he'd been in the Bs for so many years. If you look at his early career, he did some Bowery Boys pictures and things like that.

SS: Yes, he did a number of Bowery Boys pictures, and some Blondie films for Columbia.

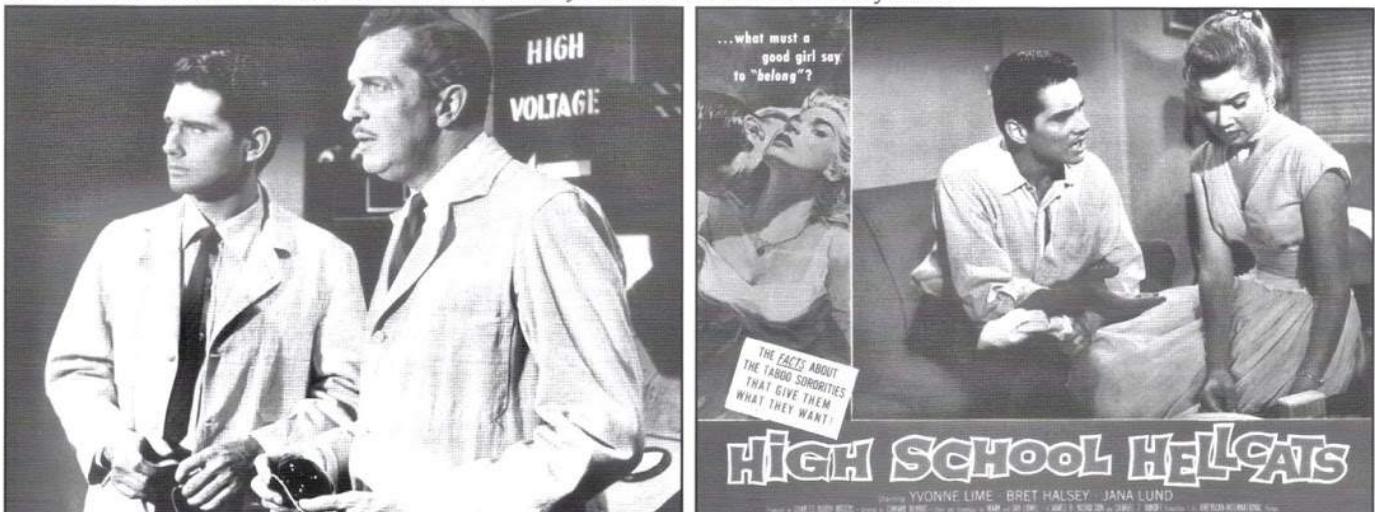
BH: You get caught in a niche, and to get out is really difficult. I found that for myself as well. To me it was amazing—jumping ahead—that we shot RETURN OF THE FLY on the Fox lot. Normally, we wouldn't shoot B films at the

major studios, because they would generally take more time. It was hard to shoot a feature in 10 days at a major studio. So it was quite an accomplishment—although we shot it in black-and-white, not that it made much of a difference.

SS: How did you land the role in RETURN OF THE FLY?

BH: That's an interesting story—to me, anyway, because it was the turning point in my career. I had been doing those B pictures and my star salary was \$500 a week, which meant I would be starring in these movies for \$1,000. Sometimes, when I complained about it, they'd say, "Look, we're doing the picture in eight days and you're getting paid for two whole weeks—you're doing fine!" Anyway, it came time to do RETURN OF THE FLY and I told my agent, "Yeah, I'd like to do the picture"—it was Fox's B-picture arm with Robert Lippert, who did a lot of B pictures for Fox because he was a major distributor—"but I'm not going to do it for \$500 a week. I want more money. It's time I start breaking through." And they wouldn't pay it, so I said, "The hell with it; I'm not going

LEFT: Despite his uncle's dire warning, Philippe Delambre is about to be caught with his Fly open. RIGHT: HIGH SCHOOL HELLCATS (1958) was one of several JD flicks in which Halsey starred.



to do it." Well, I got a call that Mr. Lipper himself wanted to see me. Now, he was a big man in the business in those days, and I was impressed that he wanted to see me. I was called into his office, and he said, "Look, I want you to do this picture. You are going to have to trust me. It is really important for your career, but I'm not going to pay you any more than the \$500 a week. I'm telling you, do the picture, but you're not going to get any more money." Coming from the top like that, I thought, "Well, one more; what the hell's the difference." (Laughs) And he was right—it lead to a contract at Fox, and the next picture was THE BEST OF EVERYTHING, which was a big, major A movie. RETURN OF THE FLY was a big stepping stone in my career.

SS: It's odd that Fox filmed RETURN OF THE FLY in CinemaScope as they did THE FLY, but switched from the Deluxe Color of the original to black-and-white.

BH: It was unusual to be both in CinemaScope and black-and-white. It must have been to save money. Color film and the processing is more expensive, but not that much more expensive. I never really understood why we did it in black-and-white. Today it doesn't matter—the fact that we shot it in CinemaScope was a big deal at the time—but for TV it doesn't matter one way or the other. I never did hear a reason.

SS: RETURN OF THE FLY was the first of two films you made with Vincent Price. Did you get a chance to know him or was it strictly a working relationship?

BH: Oh, no, no—we became friends. He was just a great guy. We had a lot of fun together. We went to Mexico a couple of times with his wife. He liked to party and have a good time. I remember once, he was in Rome making a picture, and I was living there at the time. We'd go out to dinner and dancing. He was a great art expert and I took him to meet this well-known painter I knew, named Kurt Poulter. He was Swiss. We went to an exhibit of Kurt's paintings, and I asked Vinnie—I used to call him Vinnie—I said, "Anything I should buy?" And he said, "There's one painting here that is the best painting Poulter has ever done. Buy that one." So I did, and I still have it. He was energetic in a positive way.

SS: Did you learn anything from him professionally—either about acting or the business itself—that stands out in your mind?

BH: Nothing specific. When you work with good actors, something rubs off—always. But I don't remember any specific thing. I must have learned something, but I can't tell you exactly—as opposed to something you reminded me of, an incident I had later in television with Broderick Crawford. We were doing this TV show and were about to get started. The two stars—I don't want to mention their names, because it's sort of negative against them, but they were a man and a woman—were busy acting, discussing with the director, burning up a lot of energy talking about what we were going to do. I noticed that Craw-

ford would just sit there in his chair, like he was half-asleep, kind of watching things, and then finally get up to shoot when all the discussions were finished and we were ready to shoot the scene. Crawford would get up and just kill everybody with this big talent, and then he'd go back and sit in his chair like he was half-asleep again. The big lesson I learned from Crawford was "save your energy," because you need it at the end of the day just like you need it at the beginning of the day. And he really did—he would just knock them on their ass with his magnificent talent.

SS: Did stuntman Ed Wolff play all the scenes in the gigantic fly head after your character of Philippe Delambre becomes a monster in RETURN OF THE FLY? Did you wear the big head at any point?



Brett Halsey's first thought after accidentally spilling a Coke on Susan Hayward during a scene in I WANT TO LIVE! (1958) was, "I want to die!"

BH: No. That was another selling point—"You know, you don't have to work every day. We'll be doubling you when you have a mask on." They had a problem with that because they hired Wolff, who was really tall—you can't really see it in the picture—but he couldn't move very well. He suffered from some disease that abnormally tall people have, and it was a problem with the chase scenes and stuff because he couldn't run—and, of course, he had to wear the fly foot, too. But no, it wasn't me at all.

SS: Twice during the film the Fly awkwardly bumps his big fly-head into the overhead lights, leaving them swinging away. It appears to be genuinely accidental both times.

BH: The head was pretty big, but he was tall, too. I don't know if it was an accident; I was never on the set when he was working. I don't think I ever met him.

SS: Was that your own voice coming from the tiny face superimposed on the normal-sized fly following the transformation?

BH: Oh, yeah. "Help me! Help me!"—yeah, that was me! (Laughs). I had a lot of fun, because I believed that the trans-

ference of matter could happen. Today, the way science and technology are going, it may happen sooner than later, that matter can be reduced to electrons, transmitted, and reconstructed. It made it more believable for me as an actor to believe what I was doing.

SS: In 1958 and 1959, you appeared in a total of 16 films. That's quite a schedule!

BH: Well, when you're an actor and you like what you're doing, it doesn't matter—you want to work. I never felt put upon with the work; I felt put upon that I wasn't making the money I felt I deserved. To star in five or six pictures in a row and end up having earned \$5,000—that's not movie star life.

SS: What was the major difference between a B film and appearing in an A production such as THE BEST OF EVERYTHING?

BH: The big difference was the time. THE BEST OF EVERYTHING was so leisurely. Jean Negulesco was the director. He was from the old school. My first impressions of him came my first day during lunch. It was called at 12 and lunch is an hour, and usually you're supposed to be back a little earlier than the hour to start your makeup. I was back right on the minute—and I was the only person on the stage! (Laughs) Many other things were different—wardrobe was better and there wasn't the budget consciousness so much as on the B pictures.

SS: Was THE BEST OF EVERYTHING your biggest picture up to that point?

BH: It was my biggest role in an A picture. The biggest picture I was in at that point was I WANT TO LIVE!, the Susan Hayward picture. That illustrates what I'm talking about—during my scene with her, well, two things happened. One, she was the first big star that I ever had a love scene with, that I had to kiss, so I was a little nervous being with her in the first place. The scene was set during a party, on a balcony at this house, and I bring her a hamburger and a Coke, put the Coke down, and for some reason or another throw my arms around her and give her a kiss. When we shot it, I threw my arms around her—and I hit the Coke with my hand and it spilled all over the front of her dress! Well, I could have died! And she just looked at her dress, and she looked at me and said, "Oh, Brett, did you get any on you?" I said I hadn't, and she said, "Oh, that's nice, that's nice." She was just so sweet about it. It diffused my death moment. The other thing was the hamburger—I had to throw it off the balcony when I kissed her, throw it away. When we were shooting the scenes, I'd just kind of put it aside. They'd cut and tell me to throw it away, and I'd pretend to, but I wouldn't. After about the third time, Robert Wise said, "What's wrong with you? Why can't you throw the damn hamburger away?" And I said, "Well, do you have any more?" I didn't want to have to pick up a dirty hamburger and take another bite. And he just laughed like hell!

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LEFT: Grown to handsome young manhood in *RETURN OF THE FLY* (1959), Philippe Delambre (Brett Halsey) is haunted by the bizarre death of his father in a spider's web (pictured Below Right in two stills from 1958's *THE FLY*, featuring David Hedison, Charles Herbert, and Vincent Price). He's also torn between a "normal," domestic romance with Cecile Bonnard (Danielle De Metz) and a "forbidden" love in the basement—science, or perhaps co-worker Alan Hinds (David Frankham).

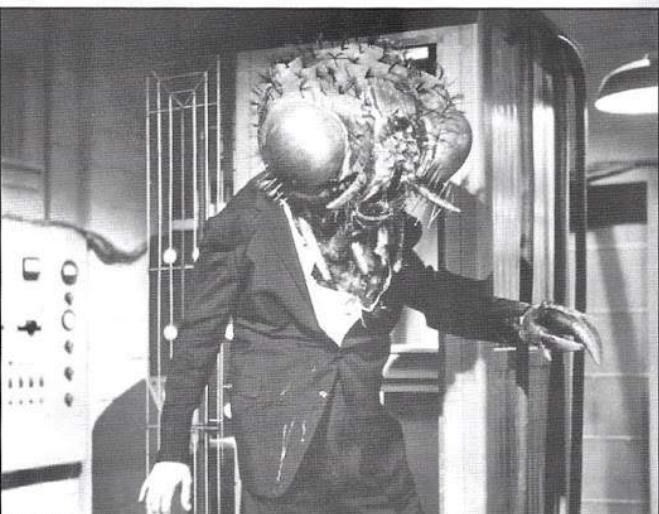
THE FILMS OF THE FLY

Continued from page 35

effort emerges as a rather pathetic attempt to recapture the terminally absent "taboo" from their civilized life. In order to save her sanitized, fly-free world, Helene needs to capture a single fly, but too many years of avoiding them altogether have left her a poor huntress, a fault she has intentionally passed on to her son.

Key moments of horror now follow one after the other for the remainder of the film, with the pall of frustrated propriety hanging over everything. Andre is so ashamed of his fly nature that he wears the black velvet cloth over his head even when he is alone. Helene, promising to understand and love him, "in sickness and in health," lets out a horrified scream when she finally sees his fly head. We are treated to the famous Fly point-of-view shot of her staring right into the camera, with a judgmental look of raw horror on her face. After this complete and total rejection of her husband now that he has unzipped his fly self, there's no suitable out for him but utter and total annihilation of the offending insect portion of his person.

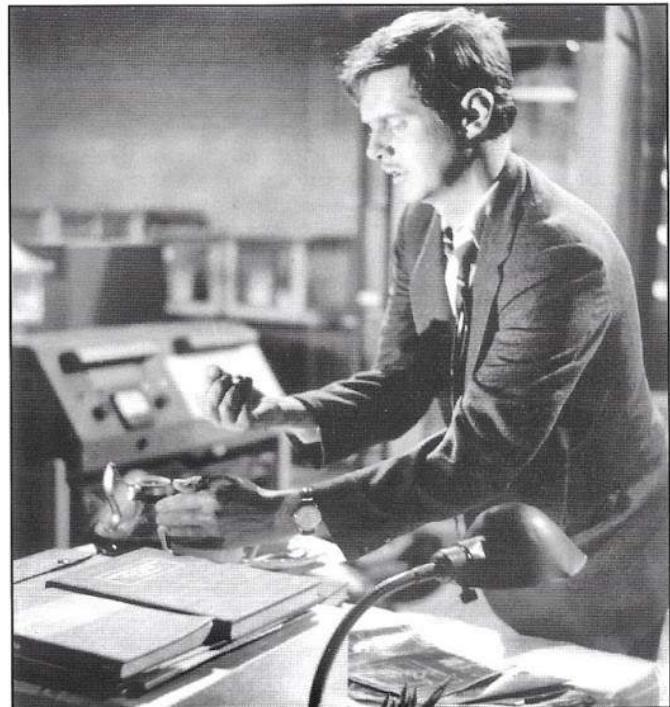
Convinced of the futility of ever catching Andre's missing parts, the distraught couple decide that all evidence of the disintegration/reintegration experiment must be destroyed, including Andre's fly head. What sort of unknown evil Andre's fly head might wreak on the world is never elaborated on, as between themselves they consider it too obvious to even question. (Similarly, in *FAR FROM HEAVEN*, neither husband nor wife question whether the husband's homosexuality shouldn't be crushed by modern psychiatry.) They both agree that murder/suicide is nothing compared to the importance of wiping Andre's abominable fly parts from the earth. Though Andre likes to dabble in the dirt, he ascribes to the societal model of cleanliness and abhors this side of himself. He aligns himself with Helene, and wants to sweep himself under the rug, so as not to horrify anyone else. His fly is permanently open and, rather than let it all hang out, he'd rather cut it off.



James Clavell, later to be celebrated for authoring such chunky seventies best-sellers as *Tai-pan* (1966) and *Shogun* (1975), was a British officer during World War II and was captured and held for several years in one of the most notorious Changi prison camps, near Singapore. One of the descriptions of the camp after it was liberated mentioned the notable absence of all insect and animal life, as the starving allies were forced to eat whatever they could find to live. Out of 150,000 soldiers interned there, only 10,000 survived. Since Clavell was one of them, we



may assume he subsisted on a diet of grasshopper, flies, and other insects for at least a part of his stay. His innately British ability to keep his memory of such horrors repressed under an unruffled British veneer is an obvious parallel to



TOP LEFT: Philippe's friend and coworker, Alan Hinds, is really the criminal Ronald Holmes, who clearly has an intimate relationship with his sugar daddy/employer, Max Berthold (Dan Seymour). CENTER LEFT: The sadistic Holmes "unzips" Philippe's fly when he places the insect in the matter transporter with the Delambre heir. BOTTOM RIGHT: Philippe gives Cecile a heads-up about his astounding transformation.

what goes on in *THE FLY*. Seen today, Helene's evident shame in not wanting a single shred of evidence of her husband's fly head to remain, and her refusal to even tell the story to the police, is ridiculous—but at the time, such emotional suppression must have felt entirely natural. In today's society, women are much less hesitant to mention their periods, or men to confess their fears. On a symbolic level, this whole fly business is comparable, a sort of accidental slippage of the civilized human mask. Now, we'd be forgiven for showing our undone "fly," but back then, you might have wound up in jail with all the "other degenerates." For Clavell, a buzzing fly landing on his steak at a

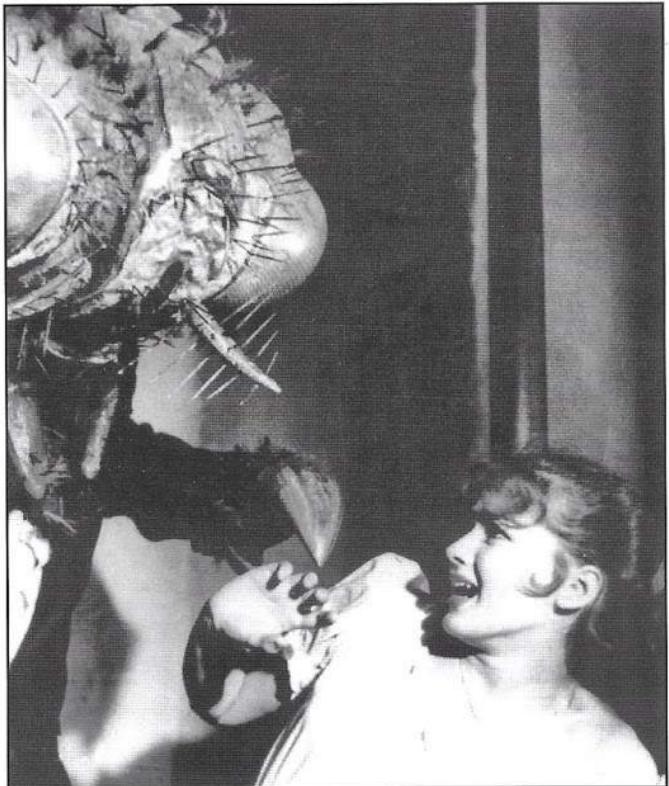
supper club dinner probably struck a nerve that all his stiff-upper-lippedness could only do so much to suppress.

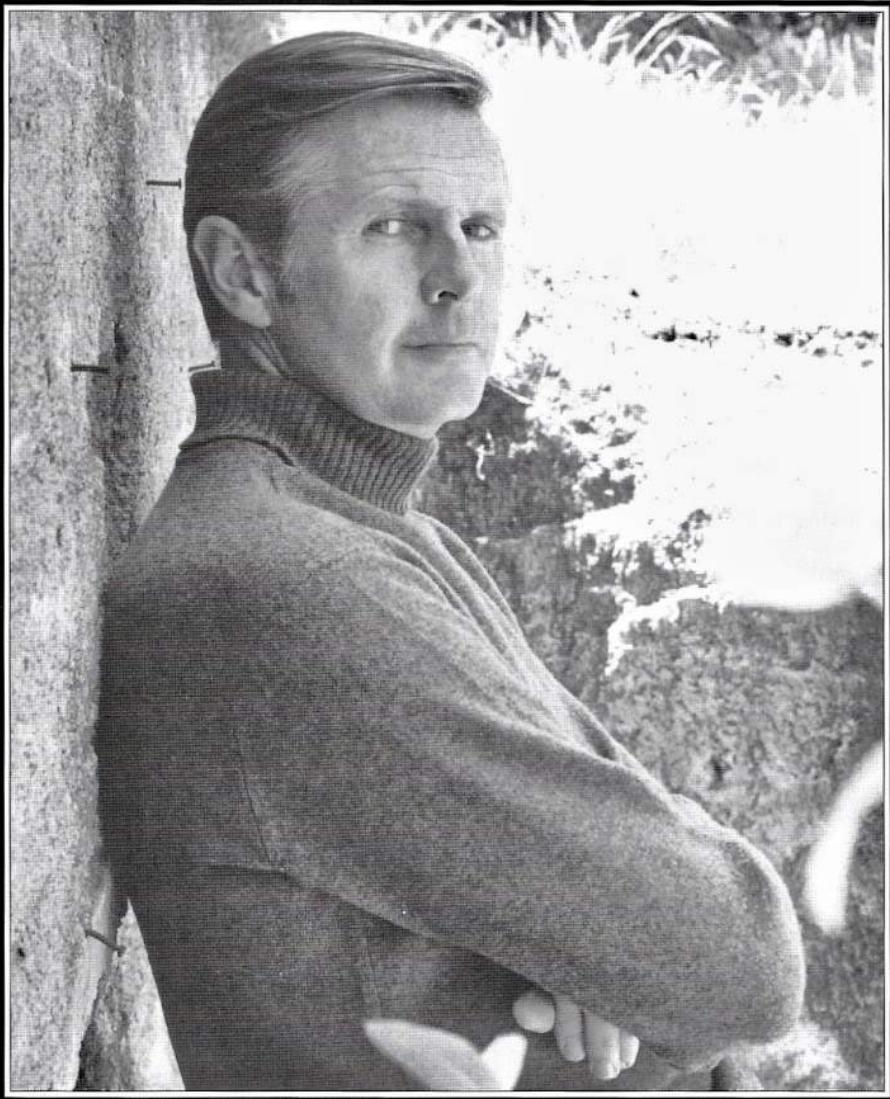
So this brings us back to Helene's bed, at the foot of which François and Inspector Charas are poised, listening to the story. Without the fly, which François confesses he never had, there isn't a shred of evidence to back up Helene's tale. How she felt she would escape punishment for her actions without any evidence of her husband's flyhood, proves she is insane. She thinks that her blithe explanation that there was a "good reason" for killing her husband will satisfy the authorities. It seems rather classicist and imperialist, that due to her good name and social rank, she should not be judged as others, nor should she have to explain her murderous actions. Commanding the two men gathered there as if they were her troops, and she the Queen giving orders from bed, she is still distracted by the occasional (nonwhite headed) fly in the room—but she is, without a doubt, a murderer. True, the crime was more in the nature of an assisted suicide, but it seems rather an extreme solution for a nonfatal condition.

Charas now has no choice but to ship Helene off to the sanitarium. The most genuinely effective horror moment in the film—more so than the famous finale—comes with the sudden arrival of the men in white suits. Actress Patricia Owens ably conveys the panic that overtakes her character, as she fully realizes her situation. Helene's horror of the men in white echoes her horror on seeing her husband's fly head. This time the horror is compounded by her son's presence; she looks into her son's eyes as she's rolled out of the bedroom and down the stairs, strapped into a gurney. This is especially scary in the context of the film, as incarceration in a mental institution was a very real horror of the era, with women right and left cracking under the unrealistic societal constraints imposed upon them. We think of the fictional Blanche DuBois and the real-life Frances Farmer, and all the women of the repressed fifties who crossed the thin line between boudoir and snake pit, never to be heard from again.

The inspector and François take Philippe away to the garden, where fortunately they stumble upon the spider's

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FLY BY NIGHT

DAVID FRANKHAM

interviewed by Jim Hollifield

As an 18-year-old architectural student during England's dark days of World War II, David Frankham never anticipated the multitude of future ironies waiting for him in Hollywood. Like the plots of some of his favorite thrillers, Frankham's story involves extraordinary moments in time, where one chance encounter opens the door to

an acting career heightened by remarkable coincidences. He doesn't entirely believe in luck, he will tell you; rather, being in the right place at the right moment creates fantastic opportunities, the likes of which are the stuff of Hollywood lore. How else could this BBC broadcaster turned late-blooming actor end up in a true-life story featur-

ing Vincent Price, Boris Karloff, Basil Rathbone, James Whale, and a host of other larger-life-characters?

One of the Golden Age of Television's most prolific actors, Frankham appeared regularly in hundreds of commercials over a 10-year period and in numerous guest-starring roles, including episodes of *THE OUTER LIMITS*, *THE BEVERLY HILLBILLIES*, *STAR TREK*, *THE F.B.I.*, *MAVERICK*, *77 SUNSET STRIP*, *CANNON*, *THE SIX MILLION DOLLAR MAN*, and *ALFRED HITCHCOCK PRESENTS*, among many others. All this, plus a film career spanning more than 20 years.

Now retired and living in New Mexico, Frankham, 77, is happy that his youthful ambition led him to Hollywood and a new career in America

Scarlet Street: It's hard to believe that your big-screen debut came in *RETURN OF THE FLY* at age 33, just a few years after giving up a successful BBC career.
David Frankham: I was training to be an architect in Britain after World War II. Wanted to be an actor, but my parents wisely said it was too risky a profession. I was drafted, went to the Far East for three years, then to Malaya, which changed the course of my life. I entered a competition in my Army canteen, naming my favorite 10 recordings, won the contest, and the prize was introducing the records over Radio Malaya. The moment they sat me in front of a microphone, I knew I had to be in show biz. They taught me to announce, to appear as an actor in their plays, to be a newsreader, to write scripts—what wonderful training for an ambitious 21-year-old.

SS: That led you to the BBC?

DF: Yes, I stayed with them from 1948 to 1955. In time, I had my own weekly radio talk show and met most of the outstanding British and American performers. It was a wonderful life, and yet I still had a restless feeling that I wanted to be an actor. So, much to my parents' dismay, I resigned from the BBC in November 1955 and set sail for America and Hollywood, sight unseen, just to try my luck. I promised my folks that, if I hadn't made good in five years, I'd go back to the BBC for the rest of my life. Luckily, things worked out very well almost from the start, so it never came to that.

SS: How did Sir Alec Guinness help you find work on radio and television?

DF: I'd interviewed Alec Guinness just before I left England, and by an amazing stroke of luck, I ran into him in Hollywood the day before he was to fly home after finishing *THE SWAN* with Grace Kelly. He was astonished to see me. I told him straight out that I had come to be an actor. During our BBC interview, he had told me bluntly that I was too old, at 29, to start acting! (Laughs) So there I was in Hollywood! He invited me to breakfast and wrote letters of introduction to various people in the industry. Who knows how tough the going might have been for me but for that chance meeting. With his

"Vincent joked right before the cameras would roll. There's a scene where you can see Mary Webster and me smiling, coming in for a scene where we're supposed to be terrified. His books are autographed to me: 'Master of the World—and don't you forget it!'"

name behind me, I did my first show on NBC a few weeks later, in a role opposite former child star Margaret O'Brien.

SS: Did you consider yourself lucky?

DF: Luck plays a part in any acting career, but being in the right place at the right time is absolutely essential to success sometimes, in any profession. In my case, my lucky breaks started as soon as I was drafted—and yet I was cursing what I thought would be a waste of my young life at that time. You never know, do you?

SS: So from the BBC to Hollywood, there you were, on TV. What were your first roles?

DF: I did NBC's MATINEE THEATRE and ended up playing in six shows for the network. I played a 21-year-old Winston Churchill when NBC did an adaptation of a play Churchill wrote, called SAVROLA. The leading lady was his real-life daughter, Sarah. After the show aired, Sarah asked for a tape to send to her father. I've often wondered if I passed muster with the great man, as himself when young!

SS: Was there a particular film or star that made you want to become an actor?

DF: In 1944, I saw THE LODGER, a Jack the Ripper thriller. That film instantly became my favorite of the genre, and still is today. In fact, I run a tape of it at least half a dozen times a year. It is unquestionably my all-time favorite movie, no matter what the genre. Laird Cregar is still my favorite actor and an inspiration to me. Watching it every night of that first week of its run, I longed to do what he was doing so sensationaly.

SS: You became close friends with LODGER onscreen victim Doris Lloyd.

DF: Pre-RETURN OF THE FLY, I had become a close friend with Doris. Doris was a mainstay of the British colony of the thirties and forties, and everybody loved her. Roddy McDowall played her

son in MIDNIGHT LACE, and she and I played mother and son several times. To my immense satisfaction, the Cregar connection carried over to my friendship with Doris—he had been her best friend! She adored him, said he was so much fun, other than a continuing frustration at his failure to lose weight. He was, to me, memorable in I WAKE UP SCREAMING with Betty Grable and Victor Mature, as a sinister detective who turns out to be the killer. In fact, he was memorable in everything he did under his Fox contract during those five brief years before his death at 28, in 1944. A really tragic loss to the business.

SS: There's a Cregar connection to your first film role, in RETURN OF THE FLY.

DF: Yes! As incredible as it may seem, 15 years after THE LODGER, we filmed scenes for RETURN OF THE FLY on that LODGER soundstage. All through those three weeks on the film, I'd go to work, playing a Fox villain, on Laird's home ground. I can't overestimate his influence on me. Another Cregar link occurred in 1962, when I did my last ALFRED HITCHCOCK PRESENTS, with John Cassavetes and his wife Gena Rowlands. The director was John Brahm, who had directed Cregar in THE LODGER and his final film, HANGOVER SQUARE. You can imagine me bending poor John Brahm's ear at every lunch break during that week's shoot. He shared my opinion of Cregar's talent.

SS: How did you win your role as RETURN OF THE FLY's villain?

DF: In February 1959, Fox had a list given to them by various agencies of young actors who might be right for the part of the villain. They wanted somebody who was going to be crooked and double-dealing, but who didn't look like it—someone who was fresh-faced, and that was how I had been typed. I had no

idea when I auditioned; I thought it was just another hero's best friend, which was what I had been playing on television. The director, Edward Bernds, said he chose me because I looked as if I'd be very sincere as the hero's best friend, but in my reading I looked as if I could be a sneaky two-timing villain, which hopefully was just nice acting that day and not the way I really am! (Laughs)

SS: What was Ed Bernds like?

DF: He had done many Three Stooges shorts and worked with Frank Capra as a sound man, and he was very warm and kindly, yet very funny. He had seen THE FLY and couldn't get rid of the idea that there should be a sequel. So he sat down and wrote the story and continued Vincent Price's character and the Brett Halsey character, who was the child in the first film, and added me and John Sutton, who played a role similar to that filled by Herbert Marshall in THE FLY. By this time, Marshall wasn't well, and the insurance company couldn't pass him. It was wonderful working with the man who not only had written the script, but who was the director as well. If we had any problems, we turned to Bernds, who worked it out.

SS: You also worked with Dan Seymour.

DF: He was a fine actor. I still remember how excited I was to have two key scenes with him in RETURN OF THE FLY. He was an actor who'd held his own with Bogart in KEY LARGO and CASABLANCA. God, he was good!

SS: Were you surprised to have a starring role in your very first movie?

DF: My own plan was to start gradually in TV, get feature roles in movies, and work my way up to leading man. I just couldn't believe it! I was so excited that I just couldn't wait to get to work! We worked in CinemaScope, which was a challenge because the actors had to do a



lot more walking about. Fox used it in the late fifties in most of its films, and it was a challenge for the director to keep the cast moving in scenes in which they really shouldn't be moving. Vincent and I had a scene where we were standing next to each other, so to fill space, Berndt had me pacing about, and I remember being nervous about remembering lines and having to keep moving at the same time.

SS: Unlike the first *FLY*, the sequel was shot in black-and-white. How did production values play into its filming?

DF: We shot in three weeks, so I imagine it was put together rather quickly, with special effects done later in the lab. My mustache was fake, because I always had a boyish look. It was my curse when I started at 30—I looked 21! They slapped a phony mustache on me and that helped some. You can easily spot a double fighting for me. It's amusing to slow down the action with the remote and discover how sloppy all my punches were in the closeup fight scenes. I suppose those things give the picture charm by today's standards, though. About a year later, John Sutton, my co-star in the *FLY* picture, and I appeared together on *MEN INTO SPACE*, an early TV series. In those days, television production values were even more limited, given their smaller budgets, so compared to television, the movie looked better back then, I'm sure.

SS: Was it hard to lose your British accent?

DF: When I first started acting, I played British all the time. My agent suggested I might double my acting if I learned to sound American, so that year I studied with a voice coach. I thought that the whole thing was a waste of time, but, boy, did it pay off three years later when Fox was looking for a newcomer to play the killer in *RETURN OF THE FLY*, and he had to sound Canadian.

SS: Please tell us about Vincent Price.

DF: Vincent was such a warm, wonderful man. He didn't like uptight people and liked to joke and have fun on the set. He straightened me out the first day of shooting. I was understandably nervous, this being my first feature. Vincent could tell, so during makeup and ward-

robe, he said, "You lucky so and so—you got the best part in the film!" I was aware that I had this wonderful, well-written part to do, so I'd go back and study the next scene. I did three films with Vincent—AIP's *MASTER OF THE WORLD* and *TALES OF TERROR* being the others—and it was always the same. Between takes, Vincent would join the cast and crew on the set, talking about the latest Hollywood news, having a good chat. So that first day, when I was off studying my lines, Vincent came in and said, "What the hell are you doing in here? Come and join the rest of us on the set and be sociable." I owe Vincent so much. Those three movies with him gave me so much confidence, and he was so encouraging and generous. When we were doing *MASTER OF THE WORLD*, he overheard me telling our leading lady that I was moving into a new house and that it would be unfurnished for awhile. The following weekend, Vincent collected me in his station wagon and took me to his huge mansion in Beverly Hills and down into the cellar, which was crammed with furniture. He insisted that I select whatever I needed as a gift. He gave me a painting that makes me think of him whenever I see it. What a man! He was one of the most admired and loved actors in Hollywood.

SS: Your infamous guinea pig scene, in which you step on and crush the squealing animal, is still remembered today.

DF: I hated lifting the animal by its ears, even though they assured me that it wasn't hurting it. Then, as now, the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals was on the set to make sure the animals weren't mistreated, mainly because of the heat; animals have to be taken away from the lights to keep them from panting on screen. But no animals were harmed, no matter how it looked.

SS: Was it challenging playing the villain in your first big role?

DF: The film liberated me from "goody goody" parts. Up until that point, I had played bland characters, best friend to the hero, men with stiff upper lips. It was my first big break. I doubled my income and my challenges as an actor. Playing a villain led to a number of roles as

crazies—I committed suicide onscreen several times, had nervous breakdowns; all of these things came about because of *RETURN OF THE FLY*.

SS: So the film changed the direction of your career?

DF: A career pattern definitely emerged following *FLY*, which I appreciate more in retrospect than I did at the time. Without that first dabble in villainy, I



would never have been considered for my next movie role, the rather cowardly alcoholic in Disney's *TEN WHO DARED*, a western with John Beal, Brian Keith, and Ben Johnson. It helped consolidate my diversion into bad and not-so-good guys. And then the Disney film led to the Boris Karloff *THRILLER* series on TV, and that led to two appearances on *OUTER LIMITS*. For the "Nightmare" episode with Martin Sheen, I turned out to be a killer again, and for the "Don't Open Til Doomsday" episode with Miriam Hopkins, I got to do my—by then—expected turn at running amok, mental breakdown, disintegration, whatever. (Laughs)

SS: What do you recall about Boris Karloff?

DF: He was host each week on the TV show *THRILLER*. I did a few, the best one of them with the fine actress Ida Lupino as director. I used to have lunch with Karloff and his wife in the Universal commissary. He was retired by then, but the studio flew him in each month or so to film the introductions to the hour-long episodes, and then he'd fly back to England. He was a terrific, gentle old actor—nothing at all like his movie image, one would hope!

SS: Your friendship with Doris Lloyd led you to meet James Whale, who had directed Karloff in *FRANKENSTEIN*.

DF: Oh, yes. Doris asked me one day in 1957 if I'd like to have tea with her and "my friend Jimmy Whale." I said, "Of course"—the penny didn't drop. It was only on the way to his home, when she mentioned he'd directed *FRANKENSTEIN*, *BRIDE OF FRANKENSTEIN*, and *SHOW BOAT*, that I realized we were on our way to meet a legend, James Whale—40 years before *GODS AND MONSTERS*!

Continued on page 66



PAGE 46 LEFT: Taking a short break from filming *MASTER OF THE WORLD* (1961), stars David Frankham and Vincent Price chat with composer Les Baxter. PAGE 46 RIGHT: In *TALES OF TERROR* (1962), Valdemar (Price) is kept alive after death by the evil Carmichael (Basil Rathbone), who hopes to force Valdemar's wife (Debra Paget) to forsake Dr. James (Frankham) and marry him. BOTTOM LEFT: Carmichael and James stare in horror as Valdemar starts to ooze away. ABOVE RIGHT: Frankham and Olive Sturgess in an episode of *THRILLER*, hosted by Boris Karloff and directed by Ida Lupino.

Charles Edward Pogue is one of the most in-demand screenwriters in Hollywood, having tackled such famous icons as *Sherlock Holmes*, *Norman Bates*, and the title insect of *THE FLY* (1986). The latter film, directed by David Cronenberg from Pogue's screenplay, was a major hit, landing on many "best films of the year" lists. That same year, Pogue provided star and first-time director Anthony Perkins with the script for *PSYCHO III*, widely considered the best of the *PSYCHO* sequels. (Between them, *THE FLY* and *PSYCHO III* were nominated for eight Saturn Awards from the Academy of Science Fiction, Fantasy, and Horror.)

Before checking into the Bates Motel, Pogue spent a considerable period of time in London's Baker Street, writing two telefilms starring Ian Richardson as *Sherlock Holmes* (1983's *THE HOUND OF THE BASKERVILLES* and *THE SIGN OF FOUR*), one starring Edward Woodward in the role (1990's *HANDS OF A MURDERER*), and the play *THE EBONY APE* (1987). Earlier still, Pogue had acted on the Los Angeles stage in Paul Giovanni's Sherlockian thriller *THE CRUCIFER OF BLOOD*, with Charlton Heston as the Great Detective and costarring future *Sherlock* Jeremy Brett as Dr. Watson.

Pogue's other credits include stories and scripts for *D.O.A.* (1988), *DRAGONHEART* (1996, for which he also penned the popular novelization), and *KULL THE CONQUEROR* (1997).

Charles Edward Pogue and *Scarlet Street* publisher/editor Richard Valley struck up an online friendship several years ago which led to the following interview . . .

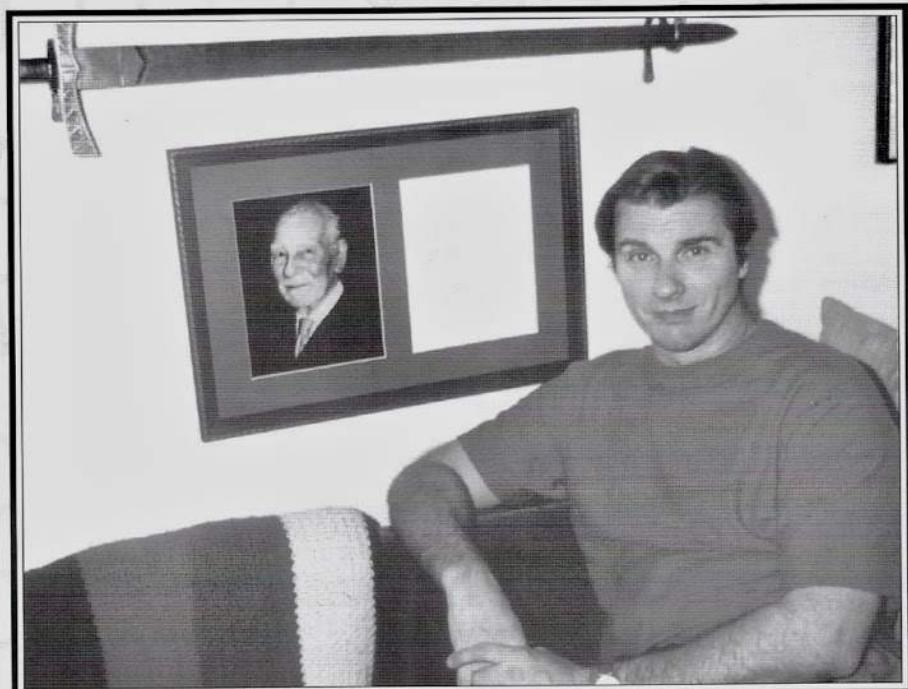
Scarlet Street: The original *FLY* films are among the most famous sci-fi movies ever made. What can you tell us about writing the 1986 remake?

Charles Edward Pogue: It was a job! (Laughs) It was my entree to the studios. I had people at 20th Century Fox who liked my work; they'd read the *Sherlock Holmes* scripts and other spec stuff that I had out. I had a manager at the time and he brought me the original short story. He said, "You've got fans over at Fox, and this is a film that needs to be remade." I'd never seen the original film. My first experience was reading the short story—which the film is actually a fairly accurate depiction of—and then I watched the film.

SS: What did you think of it?

CEP: It's a good movie. My problem was trying to understand why the hero gets a big fly's head and the fly gets a little human head. I didn't quite understand that transference. Dramatically, you have a man who comes out of this machine with no vocal abilities, no human eyes, no facial expressions—so you transfer the story to the wife. It's supposed to show her descent into madness, but she looks like Beaver Cleaver's mother in pearls! (Laughs)

SS: It does have a sitcom look to it, right down to the maid being played by Kath-



FLY PAPERS

CHARLES EDWARD POGUE

interviewed by Richard Valley

leen Freeman, just as she did on *TOPPER*. And the wife is flawlessly dressed . . .

CEP: Yes, it's that fifties glamour sort of thing. For the remake, the man undergoes a gradual transition till the very end, when he converts to whatever the hell he converts to at the end! The story remained focused on him. Fox wanted to do it; several directors had come and gone, and I was thrown off at one point and then brought back on. The producer was Stuart Cornfeld, who had done *THE ELEPHANT MAN* with Mel Brooks. But Fox wanted a producer who could provide some financing, so Stuart went back and approached Mel, and Mel got involved. I remember my one meeting with Mel Brooks, when he said, "If I say it's wrong, it's wrong, because I'm always right! Because I'm a genius!" (Laughs) And I wasn't sure if I should laugh, because I wasn't sure if that was a joke or not. Then David Cronenberg came on as the director, and Cronenberg always did his own filmwriting. He rewrote the script. Stuart sent me a bottle of

Scotch and a razor blade and said, "Drink the Scotch before you use the razor." (Laughs) David took my work and wrote from that script.

SS: Cronenberg seems obsessed with the effects of disease and change on the human body. Of course, the whole point of *THE FLY* is that the hero's body undergoes a radical change.

CEP: David followed the beats of my story pretty much in terms of the disintegration; it was, as you said, very much what the story was about—this man becoming less and less human and falling apart. My script showed the loss of his body parts. For instance, there's the fingernail scene, where he bites his nails and they come off. These are really the things that creep me out! David's script had a scene with the man looking in the medicine cabinet and there's something that looks vaguely like a penis in a jar! (Laughs)

SS: Sort of a keepsake.

CEP: Even so, I was very happy with the end result. It's a very good film; I'm glad to have my name on it. Cronenberg and I never even met till about



LEFT: Charles Edward Pogue (left) on the set of *THE SIGN OF FOUR* (1983) with Dame Jean Conan Doyle, Cherie Lunghi (who played Mary Morstan in the telefilm), producer Sy Weintraub, and Dame Jean's husband. **RIGHT:** Sherlock Holmes (Ian Richardson) fiddles while Dr. Watson (Donald Churchill) learns in *THE HOUND OF THE BASKERVILLES* (1983), scripted by Charles Edward Pogue. **BOTTOM RIGHT:** Seth Brundle (Jeff Goldblum) gets a buzz on in *THE FLY* (1986).

a month after the movie opened. Stuart called up and said, "So, do you want to meet Cronenberg?" I said, "Well, given the fact that we have a hit movie, it'd probably be nice." So, we met in a bar one afternoon. He was very pleasant, a very nice man.

SS: *THE FLY* was a great success. Were you asked to write *THE FLY II*?

CEP: Actually, I was asked to rewrite somebody else's script. I preferred not going with the sequel; I didn't like where they were going with it.

SS: Like many Scarlet Street readers, you're a devotee of *Sherlock Holmes*. Your script *THE NAPOLEON OF CRIME*, which became the telefilm *HANDS OF A MURDERER*, is really quite enjoyable.

CEP: Quite different from the rather bad movie that was made from it! I was very disappointed. Actually, it was a script I originally wrote for Sy Weintraub. Later, some guys from CBS approached me. They were reputable producers; they'd done *A CHRISTMAS CAROL* and *OLIVER TWIST*, both with George C. Scott. They'd done a lot of these classics, so they came to me after finding out I had done some *Sherlock Holmes* stories, and asked, "Do you have any scripts?" I said, "Well, I have this great script that never got done, but I don't own it." I had to go through delicate negotiations with Sy and the producers—keeping them apart and with me in the middle. Sy was very good about it. I made a little more money doing some work on it, but it was an easy script. I did maybe three hours of work rewriting. Then they got this hot British director—they had wanted Clive Donner, who had done these things for them, which I thought was a great idea—but they grabbed this young hotshot who they thought would be special.

SS: That would be Stuart Orme.

CEP: His first idea was to set it in 1914, which I couldn't see. There was no reason for it, and the producers assured me it wasn't going to happen—and

when it came out, it was set in 1914! It opened with a public hanging, which immediately was a great discrepancy in 1914. Then they had this guy running around who's supposed to be have been maimed in the Seapoy mutiny of 1857—and it's 1914 and there's a 40-year-old actor playing the guy! So you're left thinking, "How does this actually work? You know, chronologically?" (Laughs) It was very disappointing.

SS: Then there's the matter of the casting.

CEP: We had this rather barrel-chested Edward Woodward as Holmes and sort of a somnambulistic Watson played by John Hillerman.

SS: Yes, he always seemed ready to nod off.

CEP: The goatee was bad enough, but he was just so lethargic—and I read a *TV Guide* interview where Woodward and Hillerman just prided themselves on having never really read any Holmes stories—and I thought, "Oh, Jesus, who really needs this!"

SS: Had the director ever read one?

CEP: I have no idea! It was probably the best script that I'd written for a long time, I thought. I thought it was really a great script and this was such a disappointing movie. It was really very sad.

SS: It was originally planned to be the third Holmes film for Sy Weintraub, then, with Ian Richardson as Holmes.

CEP: Actually, it was the very first script I ever wrote for Sy. He was leery of it, so I went back and wrote *THE SIGN OF FOUR* and *THE HOUND OF THE BASKERVILLES*. Then we brought this one back and I did a little polish for Douglas Hickox, who'd directed *THE HOUND*. He was supposed to direct it.

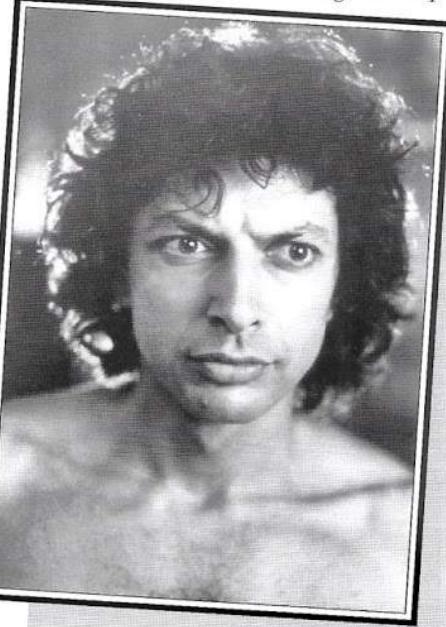
SS: Did you get more pleasure out of creating your own *Sherlock Holmes* story rather than adapting one by Conan Doyle?

CEP: Well, the problem with doing an adaptation of something like *THE HOUND* is that it's been done so many times—where do you find something fresh to do with it? That was Sy's fear, the fear of starting with *THE HOUND*;

he was pretty leery of doing it. Just to give you the background—I was the young, struggling writer, and my literary agent sent me to write a *Frankenstein* film for Weintraub, who was going to do a film with Bert I. Gordon.

SS: The man who made *THE AMAZING COLOSSAL MAN*, *THE CYCLOPS* . . .

CEP: Bert had written a script which Sy had given me, and it was filled with dialogue such as someone saying to Dr. Frankenstein, "Well, Vic . . ." —a sort of colloquial modernism, even though it was set in the proper period. I took the script and rewrote it in a week. It was really a nice script, but Sy thought it was too *MASTERPIECE THEATRE*, so I did another draft and pumped it up and added more action. Sy was pretty happy, and they actually started to shoot it—but then funding dried up. Anyway, that was my entree with Sy Weintraub. I already knew Sy's work, because I'd grown up





TOP: Charles Edward Pogue's stage work included starring opposite wife Julieanne in Shakespeare's MEASURE FOR MEASURE. MIDDLE: Pogue also appeared with one of the great female clowns—Martha Raye—in the comedy EVERYBODY LOVES OPAL. BOTTOM: Pogue with Larry Drake (seated) in THE RAINMAKER.

on the Tarzan books and had seen all the Tarzan movies that Sy had made. He had owned the franchise—that's where he made his money—but he'd been on the periphery of the business for awhile. Sherlock was his bid to get back in.

SS: *Sy Weintraub produced the Gordon Scott Tarzan films, didn't he?*

CEP: He produced the Gordon Scott films, the Jock Mahoneys, the Ron Ely TV series, the Mike Henry stuff—all the late fifties and sixties. TARZAN'S GREATEST ADVENTURE is actually considered Tarzan's greatest adventure. (Laughs) Anyway, I went to see Sy about the Frankenstein thing and knew everything about his Tarzan career, and that impressed him. We hit it off right there. At the time, he owned the Bionic Dog from THE SIX MILLION DOLLAR MAN—this German Shepherd the size of a Volkswagen! He'd become Sy's guard dog after retiring from show business. Sy had been told by the trainer that the dog had great instincts, so Sy would never do business with anybody the dog didn't like. Well, the dog loved me! (Laughs) You didn't make any sudden moves or the dog would be on you, but this dog just loved me, so Sy and I hit it off and I wrote the Frankenstein thing for him.

SS: *Did the dog get a cut of your salary?*

CEP: Yeah, he got my agent's 10%! (Laughs) Anyway, Sy liked my work on the Frankenstein script, so he threw me a Sherlock Holmes and I wrote THE NAPOLEON OF CRIME. He had British writers writing the scripts, and they were giving him these languid, MASTERPIECE THEATRE things. He was trying to get a network deal—they were going to do either 13 or 26 two-hour movies—and that kind of stuff just wouldn't play on a network. He also had American writers writing the scripts, and they were giving him THE ROCKFORD FILES in a deerstalker! I'd grown up on the Basil Rathbone films and had read most of the stories, so when I got involved I became the authority. I was reading *The Annotated Sherlock Holmes* and had three or four shelves of nothing but Sherlock Holmes horseshit, so I found the proper balance between action and authentic Holmes. I wrote THE SIGN OF FOUR—Sy really liked that script; that became the first script—and he was going to shoot it and another one he was expecting from a British writer. Then while he was over in England prepping SIGN, I got a call from him and he said, "Look, the other script that we're planning on isn't any good. I don't like it. You're going to have to come up with something in 12 days." I said, "Sy, the only thing I can do is adapt *The Hound of the Baskervilles*. The book's already broken down; the story is there. I don't have to bring anything really ornate or strange to it. I could do that." I literally wrote that script in 12 days!

SS: *That's a remarkably short amount of time to write a polished script!*

CEP: I made one major change. I kept thinking, "I need another suspect. I need another red herring somewhere." It's the only way to keep the audience

from turning immediately to Stapleton, and that's when I had this idea. The characters keep talking about this off-stage, tormented artist named Lyons, and I thought, "Well, that's a great character! Let's get that guy in!" So I did and he became a suspect.

SS: *And then you have Stapleton kill Laura Lyons, and the artist husband blamed for it. In the book, she doesn't die, and Holmes simply tells her, "You were very lucky you weren't killed."* Well, Stapleton isn't a simpleton; he would have killed her!

CEP: Yes, exactly! Look, it's a great story, but it needed something more in the way of suspects. In the script, there's a bit more stuff about men with black beards, since Holmes knows the villain might have a black beard, but three or four scenes got cut along the way.

SS: *You'd think it would be a natural, but very few films have Stapleton and Sir Hugo played by the same actor, which is done in this version. It's very well done, and Nicholas Clay really pulled it off.*

CEP: Well, it's funny, really, because when you're hanging around the set all day, you sit there and say, "He's not going to fool anybody!" You're seeing Nick in his regular makeup and then in the Sir Hugo makeup, but, of course, you know it's him. I'm glad it fooled somebody! (Laughs)

SS: *The flashback with Clay as Sir Hugo is positively the most violent version of the Baskerville legend ever put on film.*

CEP: It really is violent. I can remember the actress . . .

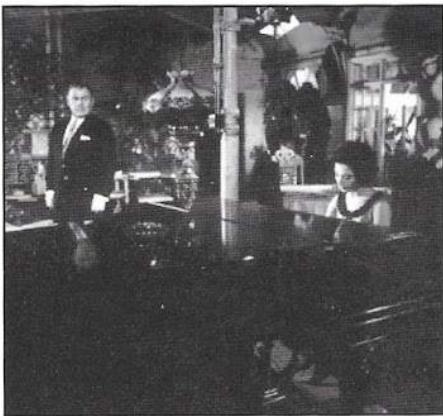
SS: Francesca Gonshaw.

CEP: . . . was very unhappy with the director, Douglas Hickox, because she felt Dougie was exploiting it. She was a little upset over his treatment of her, and that Sir Hugo was fucking her, as it were, doggie-style. (Laughs)

SS: *Then there's the business of the horse dying in the mire, too. That's never been in any other version, and it's really powerful.*

CEP: A lot of people were upset about the horse. We did it on a sound stage. There was a ramped sort of pool, but the horse would not go in it! So the rider had to ride the horse in there blind—not literally blind, of course; just not letting the horse know the ground was going out from under him and he was going into liquid. There were a lot of people who were very upset about that. I wasn't there that day, so I won't involve myself in that matter, but I will say that the horse wasn't in any way harmed and was very well cared for. It's a pretty effective scene, but the one thing that bothers me about it is that they don't really lead up to the hound. There were a few more lines, when you hear the dog howling, and you see Sir Hugo getting nervous. As it stands, now, the hound appears out of nowhere! It's missing little bits of connective tissue, which probably only bothers the writer.

Coming Up Next:
PSYCHO III



LEFT: As if being part fly wasn't bad enough, Philippe Delambre goes from looking like Brett Halsey in *RETURN OF THE FLY* to looking like Brian Donlevy in *CURSE OF THE FLY* (1965). No wonder he changes his name to Henri! CENTER: Martin Delambre (George Baker) must undergo frequent injections to keep from aging rapidly—which he still does periodically. RIGHT: Martin's wife, the piano-playing Patricia (Carole Gray), is a recent escapee from an insane asylum.

THE FILMS OF THE FLY

Continued from page 44

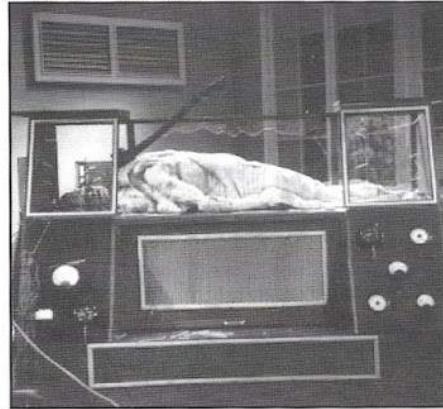
web in which the white-headed fly is snared. His eyes bugged out in raw terror, little Andre's situation mirrors Helene's in the gurney, both pinned down and ineffectually screaming for help. Director Neumann plays up the agonizing suspense, as Francois and Charas stand near the web, not hearing the pitiful "help me" screams from below. Luckily, Philippe finally points it out, and the pair gape at the tiny figure. Strangely, it resembles a toothless man in drag, whining in a high-pitched voice for help as the spider draws near. The makeup further strengthens the concept of the fly element as distinctly "other" in a feminine/masculine sense. Peered at closely, the Andre fly somewhat resembles Norman Bates, both at the climax of *PSYCHO* (1960), when Sam Loomis pins him in his manly grip and exposes him as a man in woman's clothing, and later, as the old woman (the prison blanket cloaking him much like the strands of web binding Andre) who "wouldn't even hurt a fly." That Francois and Charas both witness the horror of the fly is important, secrecy being a vital element of both traditional family dysfunction and that of the Delambres. Like Norman when Sam tears his dress, the reviled, unzipped self is finally exposed and held up to the light, squirming and unable to escape as the horror of itself—which it fought so hard to keep from view—is finally, piteously, exposed.

Unable to process the tiny horror (certainly there's no way it can be "arrested"), Charas smashes the web, spider, fly—the whole ghastly business—with a rock. It seems an

innate natural reaction to an unnatural horror, but it's actually a rejection of the "unzipped" Andre—a fly/gay-bashing. Francois points out that his act makes Charas a murderer as much as her "crime" did Helene, since the little fly was as much Andre as what Helene crushed in the press. Too shaky to argue, Charas orders Helene freed. A representative of Canadian law, Charas hereby authorizes murder as an acceptable alternative to permitting the existence of "natural abominations."

Note that this horrific sight would have remained invisible to the eyes of discerning aesthetes such as Francois and Charas, were it not for Philippe. Only when the child, lower to the ground and still harboring an interest in bugs, points it out, does Francois finally acknowledge the horrors that validate Helene's sanity—at the cost, of course, of her family's illusion of perfection. By witnessing the little horror in the web, Francois and Charas act as surrogate Freuds, freeing her of the bonds of neuroses by acting as witnesses to the unearthing of her dysfunctional family secret. Like all secret, hidden things, it turns out to be small and ineffectual once it is ripped from the shadows and held up for everyone to see. It's even laughable. (Film lore has it that Price and Marshall botched take after take of this scene because they were unable to keep a straight face.) Compared to the giant curtains, or to Francois' Modigliani on the wall, the abject is practically invisible, transformed by the teleporter to almost nothing, and on the verge of destruction. What is critical, of course, is that it not be lost again, for it is a most important piece of the puzzle. Without it, familial harmony is crushed back beneath the press.

LEFT: In keeping with *The Guide to Traditional Housekeeper Behavior* by Mrs. Danvers, Wan (Yvette Rees) is devoted to the first wife of one of her employers. Unlike the title character in *REBECCA* (1940), however, first wife Judith Delambre (Mary Manson) is still alive—though mutated. CENTER and RIGHT: Albert Delambre (Michael Graham) flips out when the family's collection of mutants are transported to London en masse.





TOP: You'll believe a man can fly—or rather, you'll believe a man (Jeff Goldblum as Seth Brundle) can turn into THE FLY (1986) and crawl around on the ceiling. ABOVE: Brundle commits a social indiscretion on the hand of Stathis Borans (John Getz) in THE FLY. PAGE 53: Martin Brundle (Eric Stoltz) inherited the standard fly genes from his dad in THE FLY II (1989). PAGES 54 and 55: The Brundles, père et fils (Goldblum and Stoltz).

Homosexuality was the dark skeleton in many a Technicolor fifties' family closet—certainly so with the Delambre family and its outcast, velvet-cloth-wearing patriarch. In today's somewhat more liberated atmosphere, it may seem hard to recognize, but with a very real and widespread sexuality completely suppressed and damned by society at large, it was only natural that it sprung up in the collective unconscious as present factor in almost anything outside the norm. Though probably not homosexual in the conventional sense, gay subtext crops up naturally where monsters are concerned, being as intertwined as they are with the forbidden. The label "homosexual" springs automatically from the collective depths, regardless of any genuine sexual orientation, the same way "communist" might do so regardless of a person's political stance—just as long as it, too, is outside the five-

ties norm. This sort of prefab condemnation was enough to drive Andre to assisted suicide, and it leaves an even harder path for son Philippe, who seems to have inherited Andre's symbolic homosexuality in the FLY sequel RETURN OF THE FLY, to follow.

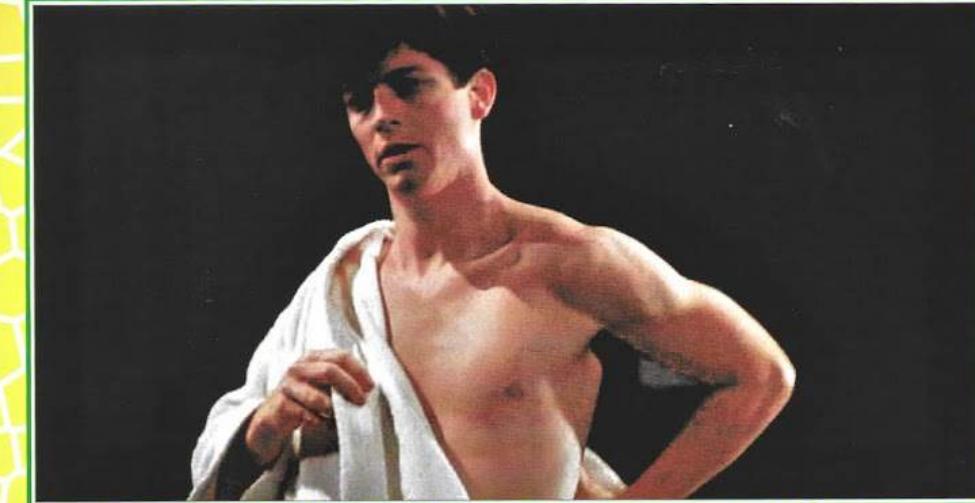
RETURN OF THE FLY was released in 1959, capitalizing on its predecessor's runaway success. Like the original, the picture is in CinemaScope, but it is filmed in stark, moody black-and-white. The world of Philippe Delambre (now full-grown and played by Brett Halsey) lacks the romantic color of his childhood. It is loveless and impoverished. Indeed, the film opens with the funeral of his mother, on a cold, rainy day at the graveyard. One can almost feel the color having been drained from the series with Helene's passing. It's odd, too, that supposedly 15 or more years have passed, though in reality only a year divides the first film from its sequel. Although RETURN OF THE FLY should therefore be a futuristic sci-fi film, no advances have been made in the world; all progress stopped when Philippe's dad died.

On the limo ride home, François (Price again, reprising his role from the original) tries to comfort his troubled nephew. In the original Langelaan short story, Helene is sent to the mental institution right off the bat, and François takes custody of Philippe (Henri in the story). No mention is made during the film of Philippe being in François' custody (Helene, after all, has just died), but we gather that Philippe has grown up with François as an unofficial father surrogate. François in both films gives the impression of being a liberated homosexual, in that he unashamedly exhibits distinctly—if stereotypically—gay characteristics, including a refined sensibility (art collecting) and the rich, feline voice that was Price's trademark. François has successfully incorporated these possibly controversial characteristics so that they complement his whole self, and even mesh agreeably with society. Philippe seems to resent François because this sort of socially accepted liberation mocks his own closeted nature, which he believes he must maintain in deference to his deceased father, who died rather than "go public."

Philippe returns to his ancestral homestead, the frilly, feminine-décor-dominated mansion of the original, to dust off his father's lab equipment and vindicate the Delambre name—this despite François' wishes and the sexual availability of the attractive young maid, Cecile Bonnard (Danielle De Metz), upstairs. Instead of Cecile, Philippe chooses to spend his time with Ronald Holmes (David Frankham), his friend and lab partner.

The unspoken homoerotic tension between the two men is wryly alluded to in various scenes. The most telling is their initial arrival at the Delambre mansion, where they are warmly received by Cecile and her mother, Madame Bonnard (Janine Grandel). Sullen Philippe wants to hide from the women in the basement, where boys can be boys, but Ronald relishes the chance for tea and to flirt with Cecile, who obviously has harbored a lifelong unrequited crush on Philippe. It's hinted that Philippe, were he to love any woman, would love her—which in this context is a gentlemanly way of slyly relegating her to "fag hag" status. The lewd, winky look on Ronald's face is the key to these scenes; he's very comfortable in this domestic setting, and relishes teasing his more closeted (or "basemented") friend by encouraging Cecile.

Fulfilling the negative gay stereotype, Ronald turns out to be a crook named Alan Hinds, who wants to sell the Delambre secrets of disintegration and reintegration to Max Berthold (Dan Seymour), his French-accented sugar daddy. Max hangs out in a nearby funeral home, all the better to be inconspicuously surrounded by flowers. (These bouquets serve as an echo of the many vases in the first film, making Max a sort of "dark mother" mirror of Helene.) Meanwhile, the obsessed Philippe, deter-



mined to complete his father's experiments, blackmails François into helping out, revealing that he, too, is ingenitately reprehensible in dealing with his own "gay sugar daddy." When the machine is finally up and running, Alan steals the plans, and when Philippe discovers the betrayal, Alan knocks him out and disintegrates him—after purposefully putting a fly in the chamber. The reintegrated Philippe/Fly smashes through the chamber and escapes into the night, the police (John Sutton as Inspector Beecham, since Herbert Marshall was unavailable to reprise Charas) hot on his heels.

From this point, the film follows a standard revenge potboiler formula, with the Fly stalking and killing both Alan and Max. (Unlike the fly-head mask used in the original, which was just sort of a pullover cloth mask with some pantyhose-egg eyes, this fly head is very large and bulbous.) The most important and interesting element in the remainder of the film comes when François captures the white fly, doing what Helene was unable to do for her husband. (With his successfully integrated yet still unique character, François can both set an impeccable table and catch flies.) He is thus able to successfully disintegrate the Fly-boy and Boy-fly and reintegrate them back into two organisms. Philippe is safely restored to normal, with his girl Cecile eagerly throwing herself in his arms.

Subtextually, all hope that the "evil gay gene" in Philippe—in other words, any fly DNA—has been left behind in the matter chamber, and that he will now, having dispatched the deceitful gay boys in his sewing circle, wed the servant girl and have some proper, human-headed children. His "new mother" François can hopefully share some of his secrets for reintegrating only the positive aspects of his shadow self. Any sort of legal concerns about whether Philippe will be held responsible for the murders committed while under the influence of raging flyness is forgotten. One can safely assume that his wealth and privilege will buy him the necessary immunity from persecution, as it did his mother. ***

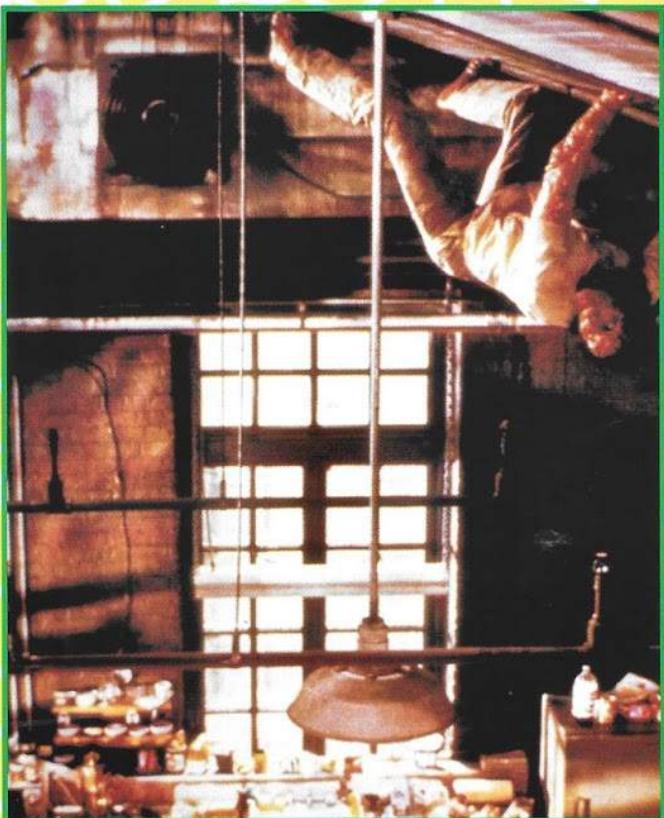
It is an interesting parallel with Hitchcock that both THE FLY and DIAL M FOR MURDER were color films, and that RETURN OF THE FLY and PSYCHO were in black-and-white. The links between the films are compelling—both THE FLY and DIAL M are big, female-led productions following the "abject under the carpet" idea of

the otherwise immaculate woman's domain, while RETURN and PSYCHO, made right before the dawn of the swinging sixties, depict the closeted gay son of a domineering matriarch, bursting out of his repressed shackles, hacking his way to an illusory freedom. It's therefore fitting that CURSE OF THE FLY (1965), a black-and-white film that came much later, was actually filmed in Britain, birthplace of Hitch, and directed by Hammer's Don Sharp. Made at Shepperton Studios with a primarily American cast, it was produced by Twentieth Century Fox's Robert Lippert, the prolific B-movie mogul responsible for ROCKET SHIP X-M (1950) and countless other unusual low-budget movies, and scripted by long-time Lippert man Harry Spalding. Long unavailable in VHS or any other format, CURSE OF THE FLY is an intriguing, intelligently scripted film worth seeking out.

The film is set again at the Delambre mansion outside of Montreal, but now also partly in London, where the second teleportation chamber is kept, for cross-continental travel. Philippe is now called Henri (his original name in the Langelaan story) and is played by 64-year-old Brian Donlevy. He has two sons of his own (the mother's identity is never made clear), also grown. The experiments are continuing, and presumably have been ever since Philippe/Henri was successfully defied at the conclusion of the previous film.

CURSE OF THE FLY opens on a particularly artistic note; there's a riveting slow-motion explosion of glass, and then a strikingly beautiful blonde woman (Carole Gray), clad only in white underwear, jumps from the window and escapes from the building (a mental institution), running and hiding in slow motion, as the credits roll. It's a considerable departure from the earlier films, combining risqué sexuality, dreamlike poetry, and instantaneous, disorienting suspense, all set to an unnerving mix of tinkly piano and unusual orchestration by Bert Shefter. The woman, Patricia Stanley, is picked up on the side of the road by Martin Delambre (George Baker), who is on his way into Montreal to buy, ahem, supplies. The sequence has a terrific urgency and noir sexiness, recalling, of course, KISS ME DEADLY (1955).

Martin loans Patricia money for clothes; love blooms; they get married. The chemistry between the actors is potent and their romantic scenes have a terrific, sexy spark to them. Thus, it's all the more tragic when it is



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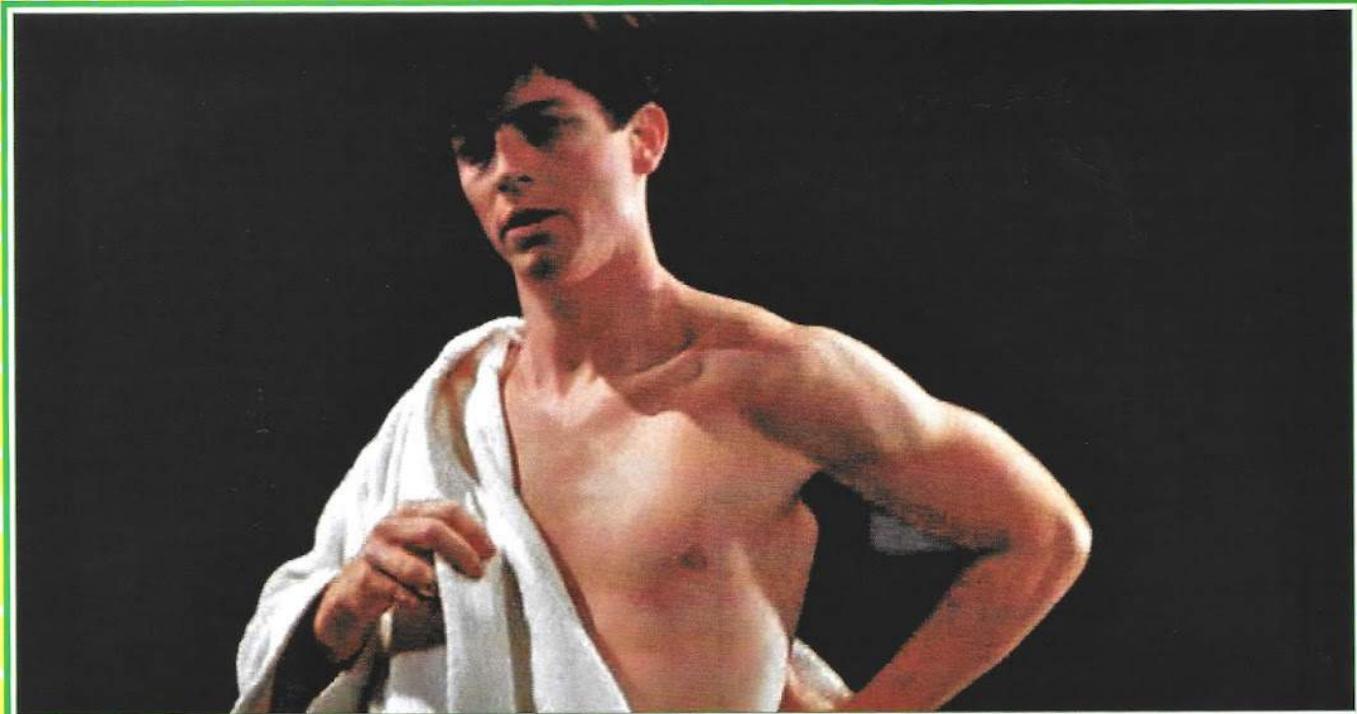
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The unspoken homoerotic tension between the two men is wryly alluded to in various scenes. The most telling is their initial arrival at the Delambre mansion, where they are warmly received by Cecile and her mother, Madame Bonnard (Janine Grandel). Sullen Philippe wants to hide from the women in the basement, where boys can be boys, but Ronald relishes the chance for tea and to flirt with Cecile, who obviously has harbored a lifelong unrequited crush on Philippe. It's hinted that Philippe, were he to love any woman, would love her—which in this context is a gentlemanly way of slyly relegating her to "fag hag" status. The lewd, winky look on Ronald's face is the key to these scenes; he's very comfortable in this domestic setting, and relishes teasing his more closeted (or "basemented") friend by encouraging Cecile.

Fulfilling the negative gay stereotype, Ronald turns out to be a crook named Alan Hinds, who wants to sell the Delambre secrets of disintegration and reintegration to Max Berthold (Dan Seymour), his French-accented sugar daddy. Max hangs out in a nearby funeral home, all the better to be inconspicuously surrounded by flowers. (These bouquets serve as an echo of the many vases in the first film, making Max a sort of "dark mother" mirror of Helene.) Meanwhile, the obsessed Philippe, deter-



mined to complete his father's experiments, blackmails François into helping out, revealing that he, too, is innately reprehensible in dealing with his own "gay sugar daddy." When the machine is finally up and running, Alan steals the plans, and when Philippe discovers the betrayal, Alan knocks him out and disintegrates him—after purposefully putting a fly in the chamber. The reintegrated Philippe/Fly smashes through the chamber and escapes into the night, the police (John Sutton as Inspector Beecham, since Herbert Marshall was unavailable to reprise Charas) hot on his heels.

From this point, the film follows a standard revenge potboiler formula, with the Fly stalking and killing both Alan and Max. (Unlike the fly-head mask used in the original, which was just sort of a pullover cloth mask with some pantyhose-egg eyes, this fly head is very large and bulbous.) The most important and interesting element in the remainder of the film comes when François captures the white fly, doing what Hélène was unable to do for her husband. (With his successfully integrated yet still unique character, François can both set an impeccable table and catch flies.) He is thus able to successfully disintegrate the Fly-boy and Boy-fly and reintegrate them back into two organisms. Philippe is safely restored to normal, with his girl Cécile eagerly throwing herself in his arms.

Subtextually, all hope that the "evil gay gene" in Philippe—in other words, any fly DNA—has been left behind in the matter chamber, and that he will now, having dispatched the deceitful gay boys in his sewing circle, wed the servant girl and have some proper, human-headed children. His "new mother" François can hopefully share some of his secrets for reintegrating only the positive aspects of his shadow self. Any sort of legal concerns about whether Philippe will be held responsible for the murders committed while under the influence of raging flyness is forgotten. One can safely assume that his wealth and privilege will buy him the necessary immunity from persecution, as it did his mother.

It is an interesting parallel with Hitchcock that both *THE FLY* and *DIAL M FOR MURDER* were color films, and that *RETURN OF THE FLY* and *PSYCHO* were in black-and-white. The links between the films are compelling—both *THE FLY* and *DIAL M* are big, female-led productions following the "abject under the carpet" idea of

the otherwise immaculate woman's domain, while *RETURN* and *PSYCHO*, made right before the dawn of the swinging sixties, depict the closeted gay son of a dominating matriarch, bursting out of his repressed shackles, hacking his way to an illusory freedom. It's therefore fitting that *CURSE OF THE FLY* (1965), a black-and-white film that came much later, was actually filmed in Britain, birthplace of Hitch, and directed by Hammer's Don Sharp. Made at Shepperton Studios with a primarily American cast, it was produced by Twentieth Century Fox's Robert Lippert, the prolific B-movie mogul responsible for *ROCKET SHIP X-M* (1950) and countless other unusual low-budget movies, and scripted by long-time Lippert man Harry Spalding. Long unavailable in VHS or any other format, *CURSE OF THE FLY* is an intriguing, intelligently scripted film worth seeking out.

The film is set again at the Delambre mansion outside of Montreal, but now also partly in London, where the second teleportation chamber is kept, for cross-continental travel. Philippe is now called Henri (his original name in the Langelaan story) and is played by 64-year-old Brian Donlevy. He has two sons of his own (the mother's identity is never made clear), also grown. The experiments are continuing, and presumably have been ever since Philippe/Henri was successfully defiled at the conclusion of the previous film.

CURSE OF THE FLY opens on a particularly artistic note; there's a riveting slow-motion explosion of glass, and then a strikingly beautiful blonde woman (Carole Gray), clad only in white underwear, jumps from the window and escapes from the building (a mental institution), running and hiding in slow motion, as the credits roll. It's a considerable departure from the earlier films, combining risqué sexuality, dreamlike poetry, and instantaneous, disorienting suspense, all set to an unnerving mix of tinkly piano and unusual orchestration by Bert Shefter. The woman, Patricia Stanley, is picked up on the side of the road by Martin Delambre (George Baker), who is on his way into Montreal to buy, ahem, supplies. The sequence has a terrific urgency and *noir* sexiness, recalling, of course, *KISS ME DEADLY* (1955).

Martin loans Patricia money for clothes; love blooms; they get married. The chemistry between the actors is potent and their romantic scenes have a terrific, sexy spark to them. Thus, it's all the more tragic when it is

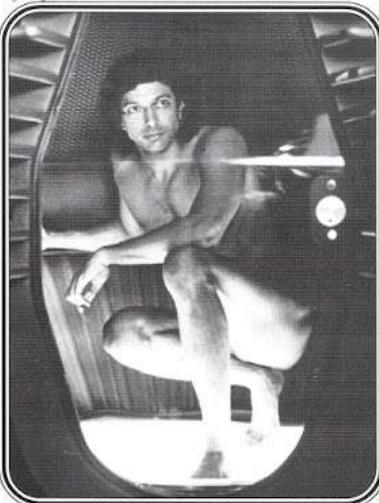
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The Delambre curse is already all too apparent. Whatever evil gene François might have hoped was disintegrated in his foster son is still there. Henri has learned all the wrong lessons from his mother and father, enforcing his sickly code of "science über alles" as if it was an appropriate model for a nuclear family. He's spliced the worst attributes of both his mom and his pop (fly): a domineering attitude towards propriety and family, only with ruthless, amoral science as its model. In his forward thinking way, Henri has again become Norman/Norma Bates—only this time he's evaded capture, becoming the bossy matriarch of a TEXAS CHAINSAW MASSACRE clan in lab smocks.

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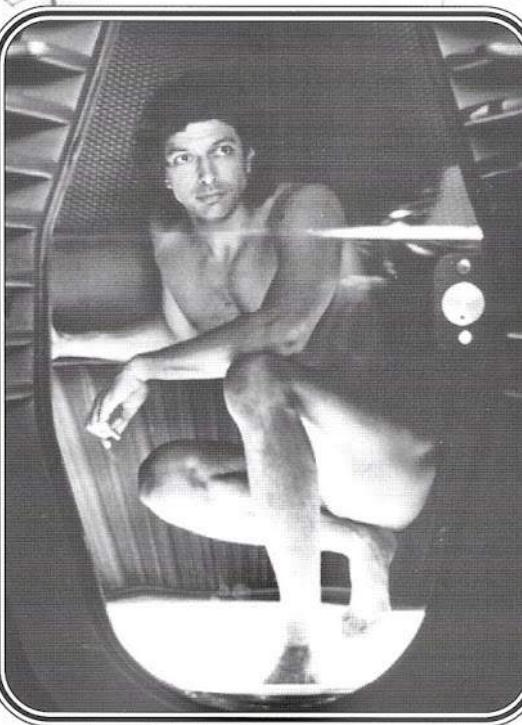
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Scarlett's Sister Ann Rutherford

Interview by Todd Livingston

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Scarlet Street: That's true. After *GONE WITH THE WIND*, you went back to making Andy Hardy films. Judy Garland appeared in a couple of them.

AR: Oh, yes! She played Betsy Booth. Oh, honey, she just was an incredible talent. The first time I saw her was at the Pantages Theater with her sisters; she was one of the Gumm Sisters. I don't think she could have been more than eight or nine years old, and she looked about six because she hadn't gotten her spurt of growth yet. She came out on stage with this little Dutch bob and opened her mouth and sang "Stormy Weather" and just tore up the house! She was unbelievable! This was back in the days when every movie had a vaudeville show before it. I tell you, the hair on the back of your neck would rise up when that child would sing. My sister and I were sitting there eating candy, and I damned near strangled! (Laughs) We just stared at each other and said, "Listen to her!"



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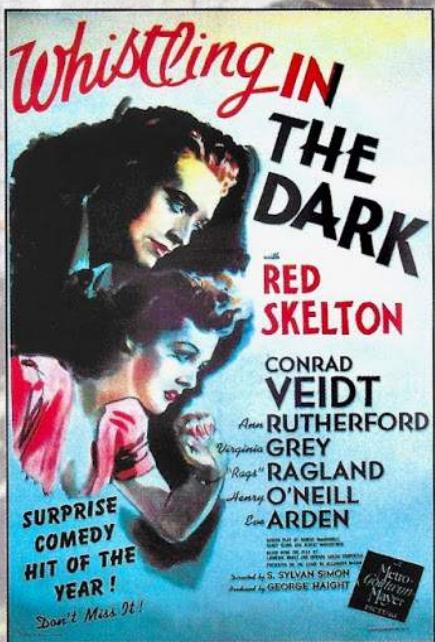
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LEFT: Ann Rutherford played the girl next door from Hell in *THE SECRET LIFE OF WALTER MITTY* (1947), with a mother from Hell played by Florence Bates. The man Gertrude Griswold (Rutherford) plans to marry is Walter Mitty (Danny Kaye), but her heart belongs to the boorish Tubby Wadsworth (Gordon Jones). Even Walter's own mom (Fay Bainter) seems to prefer Tubby. RIGHT: Errol Flynn rests his head in Rutherford's lap in *THE ADVENTURES OF DON JUAN* (1948). BELOW: Sylvester (Rags Ragland) threatens Wally Benton (Red Skelton) and Carol Lambert (Rutherford) in *WHISTLING IN THE DARK* (1941).

SS: Did your husband, producer William Dozier, ever ask you to appear on *BATMAN* or any of his other TV series?

AR: Oh, yes, but I wouldn't dream of it; I was having more fun with the kids. You know, I was living my life backwards. I was doing it all bass ackwards. (Laughs) I started working too young, so I went through a second childhood.

SS: Besides Red Skelton, you worked with another famous redhead—Danny Kaye, in *THE SECRET LIFE OF WALTER MITTY*.

AR: He was like another Red Skelton, like cream that floats to the top. He was just so enormously talented and a joy to work with on *MITTY*. And the years passed and passed and passed, and ev-

ery time he'd see me he'd say, "How's Queenie?"—a wretched little dog that I was forced to carry around in the film. It was one of those little white Poodles with red stains on their sides. Danny was a dear and a wonderful chef. A marvelous cook! He could make Chinese food—he had a Chinese kitchen with gas vents about three inches across. It was amazing he didn't set fire to all of Beverly Hills. (Laughs) He'd just get his wok out and start cooking.

SS: *MITTY* has another fan favorite in its cast—Boris Karloff.

AR: Yes, we worked together. I remember how amazed I was that he bore no resemblance at all to the Frankenstein

Monster. He was just a charming British gentleman. I had seen his horror movies and just scared myself silly!

SS: Did you have a favorite?

AR: No, because they were so scary I only saw them once! (Laughs)

SS: For most horror fans, it's *BRIDE OF FRANKENSTEIN*.

AR: Charles Laughton's wife was the Monster's bride. No one could have been better! I used to go to a theater on La Cuenga. It was like a streetcar—the first half was a puppet show and at the interval you stood, pushed the back of the seat to the front like a streetcar seat, and faced in the other direction and saw another show. Elsa Lanchester was always in it. I traveled with Charles Laughton during the war for three months, selling War Bonds, and he said, "You know, Elsa came out to do that show for two weeks and she's going to be doing it forever." She loved it; she needed an audience. She was quite a character.

SS: And speaking of characters, you worked with Errol Flynn on *THE ADVENTURES OF DON JUAN*.

AR: He was a joy! He really was a character. Well, it takes a character to have the nerve to go on a set with a monkey on your shoulder. (Laughs) He was fun to be with, and we all took turns trying to catch his doggone monkey. If he was drinking, it was probably his usual consumption. It didn't interfere with his work. He was still enormously handsome, but not quite as pretty as he was, because your choices in life show up on your face. I found him enchanting and a delightful person.

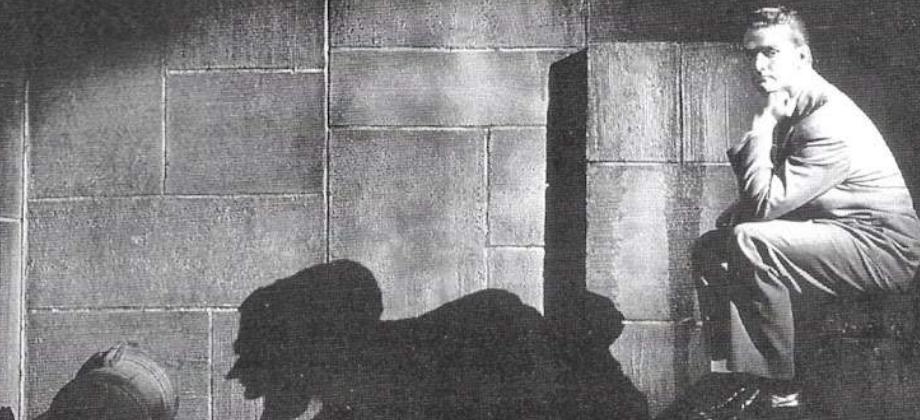
SS: *DON JUAN* was directed by the talented Vincent Sherman.

AR: Oh, isn't he marvelous? He's phenomenal; he's just galloping around—he goes to the opening of a door! But he's having a good life, and he's just gorgeous. The last time I saw him, he



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MGM's Great Red Hope



Red Skelton and the Whistling films

by Richard Valley

The situation is desperate! A man's life is at stake! Harvey Upshaw, preparing for sleep on an overnight flight, doesn't know that one of his fellow passengers is a killer who's mixed Upshaw's toothpaste with a fast-acting, undetectable, "practically painless" poison. Wally Benton knows the score, though, for Wally is that famed radio sleuth known as The Fox. Held against his will by the sinister Silver Tide cult in a lonely mansion, he's been forced to use his talent for inventing foolproof crimes to plot Upshaw's death. With the murder due to take place at any minute, Wally desperately tries to get a warning to Upshaw by devising a makeshift broadcast system using cut telephone wires and an old radio. Fending off the bad guys, he finally gets through when a mean widdle kid on the plane stubbornly tunes in The Fox:

"Harvey Upshaw! If you can hear me, do not gargle tonight!" warns Wally. "Don't do anything or you're a dead man! Especially, do not brush your teeth!"

The petrified Upshaw stares at the radio and blurts out a reply. "Don't worry!" he blubbers. "I won't even take 'em out!"

The day is saved! The villains are routed! And with the conclusion of WHISTLING IN THE DARK (1941), a star—Red Skelton, 28 years old and a veteran of 17 years in show business—is born.

Previously, he'd been born Richard Bernard Skelton in Vincennes, Indiana, on July 18, 1913. The star-to-be's background was steeped in the traditions of American entertainment, including medicine and minstrel shows, vaudeville, burlesque, and the circus. (Shades of SHOW BOAT—he even performed on a river boat called the Cotton Blossom!) Skelton made his radio debut in 1936 on Rudy Vallee's FLEISCHMANN'S HOUR, with his own popular show running from 1941 to 1953 and overlapping with his Emmy-winning TV career. On radio, he devel-

oped a series of comic characters—Clem Kadiddlehopper, Freddie the Freeloader, George Appleby, Willy Lump Lump, Cauliflower McPugg, Sheriff Deadeye, and San Fernando Red—that would carry over to the small screen.

Skelton made his feature film debut in a supporting role in HAVING WONDERFUL TIME, a 1938 RKO feature based on a hit Broadway show. (The later musical version completed the famous phrase by calling itself WISH YOU WERE HERE.) Unlike the play, the film was a flop and the redhead clown returned to radio and the stage. Then, in 1940, Skelton crossed paths with a far more famous (though considerably shorter) carrot-top while entertaining at a White House birthday celebration for Franklin Delano Roosevelt—Mickey Rooney. The pint-sized dynamo was one of Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer's brightest stars and the frequent onscreen boyfriend (in the Andy Hardy series) of Ann Rutherford, who was destined to play Skelton's love interest in WHISTLING IN THE DARK and its two sequels. Rooney recommended Skelton to MGM mogul Louis B. Mayer. Another endorsement came from film star Lupe Velez, who was dating MGM director Frank Borzage and suggested that Skelton be put in a movie.

The thirties and forties were the heyday of the series film. Everyone had a series—Rooney with Andy Hardy, Velez with Mexican Spitfire, Lew Ayres and Lionel Barrymore with Dr. Kildare, Basil Rathbone with Sherlock Holmes, Ann Sothern with Maisie. Signed by Metro to lend comic support in such series films as PEOPLE VS. DR. KILDARE (1941), DR. KILDARE'S WEDDING DAY (1942), and MAISIE GETS HER MAN (1942), Skelton found himself suddenly elevated to star status when the studio blew the dust off a 1932 Broadway comedy by Laurence Gross and Edward Childs Carpenter and cast him in WHISTLING IN THE DARK.



There had been a previous film version of the play eight years earlier, in 1933. It starred Ernest Truex and Una Merkel as Wallace Porter and Toby Van Buren, the romantic couple forced by gangsters to fashion the perfect murder. The picture was amusing, though it stretched credulity to watch brassy Toby constantly trying to get the fey Wallace into bed before they're bumped off. Truex's comic speciality being a prissiness that served him better in such roles as the spit-curled homebody Sapiens in *THE WARRIOR'S HUSBAND* (1933) or the poetry-spouting Roy V. Bensinger in *HIS GIRL FRIDAY* (1940). In any event, the story would undergo considerable updating for the remake, including references to the Orson Welles infamous radio broadcast *THE WAR OF THE WORLDS* and the Alfred Hitchcock film *REBECCA* (1940).

Though Skelton had been getting good reviews for minor work ("Red Skelton again shows that he is one of the screen's up-and-coming clowns," said the *Baltimore Evening Sun's* Gilbert Kanour of his role in *PEOPLE VS. DR. KILDARE*), it wasn't his growing popularity that convinced MGM to see Red in *WHISTLING IN THE DARK*. Rather, it was another popular comedian and film at a studio other than MGM that indirectly made Skelton a movie star. The comedian was Bob Hope, and the film—in which Hope played radio commentator Larry Lawrence—was Paramount's *THE GHOST BREAKERS* (1940).

"The talk is that the MGM studio fondly believes they've discovered another Bob Hope in the personality of a lad named Red Skelton . . ."

—New York Morning Telegraph

In many ways, Red Skelton was a generous performer. Time and again in the three Whistler comedies (and also in *MAISIE GETS HER MAN*, 1942's *PANAMA HATTIE*, and 1943's *DUBARRY WAS A LADY*), he lets some of the best lines and bits go to fellow burlesque veteran Rags Ragland. In other instances, however, particularly when it came to acknowledging his debt to a fellow artist, Skelton played it very close to the vest. He was always uncomfortable concerning career parallels with Bob Hope. Yet there were many points of comparison, and they didn't escape the notice of contemporary critics when *WHISTLING IN THE DARK* opened in the summer of 1941.

Wrote Bosley Crowther in *The New York Times*: "To the cheerfully swelling list of bright new film comedians you may add the rosy name of Richard (Red) Skelton. For Metro has really turned up an impressive young Bob Hopeful in the person of this jaunty chap . . . While there is Hope, there's Skelton, too."

Where there's Hope, there had been Skelton even earlier than 1941. In his fact-filled *Seeing Red: The Skelton*



in Hollywood's Closet (Robin-Vincent Publishing, 2001), Wes D. Gehring writes about Skelton's smash appearance at New York's Paramount Theater in 1940, where he apparently anticipated TV horror hosts by almost two decades, stepping out onto the stage while the feature film (*DR. CYCLOPS*) was running and offering caustic quips on the bizarre action taking place onscreen. To irreverently comment on a film (usually from within the film itself) was very much a Hope specialty, and it's worth noting that earlier in the Paramount run Skelton's stage antics supported a film that spawned the most irreverent series in motion picture history—*ROAD TO SINGAPORE*, starring Bing Crosby, Dorothy Lamour, and (billed third for the only time in the series' history) Bob Hope.

Furthering the parallelism between Skelton and Hope was the fact that, starting in 1941, their respective radio shows were broadcast back to back on Tuesday nights, with ol' Ski Nose being the first out of the starting gate. Such was Skelton's sensitivity regarding Hope that decades later, in a 1977 interview with Ross Wetzsteon for the *Village Voice*, the comic claimed, "I wanted to go on after so I could prove I wasn't just somebody's imitation of Hope . . . I passed Hope in the ratings." True enough, but it took eight years to do so. Besides, in 1977 no one remembered that there had ever been comparisons made between the two comedians.

No one, that is, except Red Skelton . . .

Prior to *THE GHOST BREAKERS*, Bob Hope had achieved film stardom in yet another horror/mystery spoof—*THE CAT AND THE CANARY* (1939). Tellingly, he played a radio personality. Crime-solving (and -committing) radio stars also figure in a number of other films. *DEATH AT BROADCASTING HOUSE* (1934), based on a novel by Val (brother of John) Gielgud, was—obviously—set at a radio station. *SUPER SLEUTH* (1937) starred Jack Oakie as a movie star who plays detective, but when the property was remade as *GENIUS AT WORK* (1946), it starred Wally Brown and Alan Carney as two radio sleuths matching half-wits with the Cobra (Lionel Atwill) and his sinister manservant (Bela Lugosi). *DANGER ON THE AIR* (1938) starred Donald Woods as a radio engineer who solves the murder of sponsor Berton Kluck (Berton Churchill). *UP IN THE AIR* (1940) had radio page Frankie Ryan (Frankie Darro) and janitor Jeff Jefferson (Mantan Moreland) on the trail of whoever slew singer Rita Wilson (Lorna Gray). A radio broadcast figures prominently in the plot of *CHARLIE CHAN AT THE WAX MUSEUM* (1940), though Charlie (Sidney Toler), of course, is no radio star. Bud Abbott and Lou Costello split the horror/mystery spoof in twain (the twain on twack tweed), reserving the old dark house elements for *HOLD THAT GHOST* (1941) and



playing two aspiring radio writers in *WHO DONE IT?* (1942). In *LAURA* (1944), Clifton Webb was Waldo Lydecker, a radio wit famed for his crime essays. Waldo doesn't solve murder, though; he commits one. Claude Rains followed suit in *THE UNSUSPECTED* (1947), as murderous Victor Grandison. And lest anyone think the plethora of radio references stemmed only from the medium's concurrent popularity with the films featuring it, there's *RADIOLAND MURDERS*, set in 1939 but made in 1994.

That *WHISTLING IN THE DARK* owes its inspiration to *THE GHOST BREAKERS* is obvious. The dialogue is rife with wisecracks as suitable to Hope's delivery as they are to Skelton's—perhaps more so. ("What are you, a man or a mouse?" "A man—but tell me if you see a cat coming.") Not surprisingly, Hope fares better with the verbal humor in *THE GHOST BREAKERS* than Skelton does in *WHISTLING*, but Skelton outshines him in the slapstick. He also does well in his radio bits, explaining how he solved various crimes with a casual smugness worthy of Ellery Queen. ("A true maharaja winds his turban from right to left," he elucidates, "never from left to right.")

Some of the material is on the racy side for 1941, especially for that "family studio," MGM. In an early scene, Wally's agent, Buzz Baker (Eve Arden), sits at a nightclub table with the sponsor's daughter (Virginia Grey), waiting for her client to show up. "If a gentleman arrives asking for Miss Post," she tells a waiter, "show him over here, will you?"

"One gentleman for two ladies?" sniffs the waiter.

"Oh, it's all right," says Buzz. "I'm just going to watch."

WHISTLING IN THE DARK has a talented cast lending Skelton sterling support, including one of the screen's great villain's, Conrad Veidt, as Joseph Jones, the criminal head of the spiritual Silver Tide cult. (It's disconcerting that the character name is so similar to that of a later cultist—People's Temple leader Jim Jones, who led over 1,000 gullible members to mass suicide in Guyana.) Lloyd Corrigan delights as potential murder victim Harvey Upshaw. As Hilda, the Silver Haven housekeeper, Mariska Aldrich makes Minerva Urecal look like Hedy Lamarr. And Ann Rutherford is all spunk charm as radio actress Carol Lambert.

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There had been a previous film version of the play eight years earlier, in 1933. It starred Ernest Truex and Una Merkel as Wallace Porter and Toby Van Buren, the romantic couple forced by gangsters to fashion the perfect murder. The picture was amusing, though it stretched credulity to watch brassy Toby constantly trying to get the fey Wallace into bed before they're bumped off, Truex's comic specialty being a prissiness that served him better in such roles as the spit-curled homebody Sapiens in *THE WARRIOR'S HUSBAND* (1933) or the poetry-spouting Roy V. Bensinger in *HIS GIRL FRIDAY* (1940). In any event, the story would undergo considerable updating for the remake, including references to the Orson Welles infamous radio broadcast *THE WAR OF THE WORLDS* and the Alfred Hitchcock film *REBECCA* (1940).

Though Skelton had been getting good reviews for minor work ("Red Skelton again shows that he is one of the screen's up-and-coming clowns," said the *Baltimore Evening Sun*'s Gilbert Kanour of his role in *PEOPLE VS. DR. KILDARE*), it wasn't his growing popularity that convinced MGM to see Red in *WHISTLING IN THE DARK*. Rather, it was another popular comedian and film at a studio other than MGM that indirectly made Skelton a movie star. The comedian was Bob Hope, and the film—in which Hope played radio commentator Larry Lawrence—was Paramount's *THE GHOST BREAKERS* (1940).

"The talk is that the MGM studio fondly believes they've discovered another Bob Hope in the personality of a lad named Red Skelton"

—*New York Morning Telegraph*

In many ways, Red Skelton was a generous performer. Time and again in the three Whistler comedies (and also in *MAISIE GETS HER MAN*, 1942's *PANAMA HATTIE*, and 1943's *DUBARRY WAS A LADY*), he lets some of the best lines and bits go to fellow burlesque veteran Rags Ragland. In other instances, however, particularly when it came to acknowledging his debt to a fellow artist, Skelton played it very close to the vest. He was always uncomfortable concerning career parallels with Bob Hope. Yet there were many points of comparison, and they didn't escape the notice of contemporary critics when *WHISTLING IN THE DARK* opened in the summer of 1941.

Wrote Bosley Crowther in *The New York Times*: "To the cheerfully swelling list of bright new film comedians you may add the rosy name of Richard (Red) Skelton. For Metro has really turned up an impressive young Bob Hopeful in the person of this jaunty chap . . . While there is Hope, there's Skelton, too."

Where there's Hope, there had been Skelton even earlier than 1941. In his fact-filled *Seeing Red: The Skelton*

in Hollywood's Closet (Robin-Vincent Publishing, 2001), Wes D. Gehring writes about Skelton's smash appearance at New York's Paramount Theater in 1940, where he apparently anticipated TV horror hosts by almost two decades, stepping out onto the stage while the feature film (*DR. CYCLOPS*) was running and offering caustic quips on the bizarre action taking place onscreen. To irreverently comment on a film (usually from within the film itself) was very much a Hope specialty, and it's worth noting that earlier in the Paramount run Skelton's stage antics supported a film that spawned the most irreverent series in motion picture history—*ROAD TO SINGAPORE*, starring Bing Crosby, Dorothy Lamour, and (billed third for the only time in the series' history) Bob Hope.

Furthering the parallelism between Skelton and Hope was the fact that, starting in 1941, their respective radio shows were broadcast back to back on Tuesday nights, with ol' Ski Nose being the first out of the starting gate. Such was Skelton's sensitivity regarding Hope that decades later, in a 1977 interview with Ross Wetzsteon for the *Village Voice*, the comic claimed, "I wanted to go on after so I could prove I wasn't just somebody's imitation of Hope . . . I passed Hope in the ratings." True enough, but it took eight years to do so. Besides, in 1977 no one remembered that there had ever been comparisons made between the two comedians.

No one, that is, except Red Skelton

Prior to *THE GHOST BREAKERS*, Bob Hope had achieved film stardom in yet another horror/mystery spoof—*THE CAT AND THE CANARY* (1939). Tellingly, he played a radio personality. Crime-solving (and -committing) radio stars also figure in a number of other films. *DEATH AT BROADCASTING HOUSE* (1934), based on a novel by Val (brother of John) Gielgud, was—obviously—set at a radio station. *SUPER SLEUTH* (1937) starred Jack Oakie as a movie star who plays detective, but when the property was remade as *GENIUS AT WORK* (1946), it starred Wally Brown and Alan Carney as two radio sleuths matching half-wits with the Cobra (Lionel Atwill) and his sinister manservant (Bela Lugosi). *DANGER ON THE AIR* (1938) starred Donald Woods as a radio engineer who solves the murder of sponsor Berton Kluck (Berton Churchill). *UP IN THE AIR* (1940) had radio page Frankie Ryan (Frankie Darro) and janitor Jeff Jefferson (Mantan Moreland) on the trail of whoever slew singer Rita Wilson (Lorna Gray). A radio broadcast figures prominently in the plot of *CHARLIE CHAN AT THE WAX MUSEUM* (1940), though Charlie (Sidney Toler), of course, is no radio star. Bud Abbott and Lou Costello split the horror/mystery spoof in twain (the twain on twack twee), reserving the old dark house elements for *HOLD THAT GHOST* (1941) and



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playing two aspiring radio writers in *WHO DONE IT?* (1942). In *LAURA* (1944), Clifton Webb was Waldo Lydecker, a radio wit famed for his crime essays. Waldo doesn't solve a murder, though; he commits one. Claude Rains followed suit in *THE UNSUSPECTED* (1947), as murderous Victor Grandison. And lest anyone think the plethora of radio references stemmed only from the medium's concurrent popularity with the films featuring it, there's *RADIOLAND MURDERS*, set in 1939 but made in 1994.

That *WHISTLING IN THE DARK* owes its inspiration to *THE GHOST BREAKERS* is obvious. The dialogue is rife with wisecracks as suitable to Hope's delivery as they are to Skelton's—perhaps more so. ("What are you, a man or a mouse?" "A man—but tell me if you see a cat coming.") Not surprisingly, Hope fares better with the verbal humor in *THE GHOST BREAKERS* than Skelton does in *WHISTLING*, but Skelton outshines him in the slapstick. He also does well in his radio bits, explaining how he solved various crimes with a casual smugness worthy of Ellery Queen. ("A true maharaja winds his turban from right to left," he elucidates, "never from left to right.")

Some of the material is on the racy side for 1941, especially for that "family studio," MGM. In an early scene, Wally's agent, Buzz Baker (Eve Arden), sits at a nightclub table with the sponsor's daughter (Virginia Grey), waiting for her client to show up. "If a gentleman arrives asking for Miss Post," she tells a waiter, "show him over here, will you?"

"One gentleman for two ladies?" sniffs the waiter.

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The Hardy Family and friends—Ann Rutherford, Mickey Rooney, Cecilia Parker, Lewis Stone, Fay Holden, Virginia Grey, Sara Haden, and John King—in **THE HARDYS RIDE HIGH** (1939).

ANN RUTHERFORD

Continued from page 58

brought a photograph of me sitting with Errol Flynn's head in my lap. (Laughs) He's a very generous, very sweet man.

SS: Who was your favorite director?

AR: George Seitz, who directed the Hardy pictures. His patience was legion. He would let Mickey be creative to the point of even changing things around. He'd shoot it his way and then, if Mickey came up and tugged on his sleeve and said, "Uncle George, I got an idea," they'd stop tearing the set up, they'd put the lights on again and call us all back, and Mickey would explain his own version of playing the scene. And that was invariably the one they'd print, and it would always wind up in the movie. It took a very big man to do that!

SS: Of all your films, which offered the greatest challenge as an actress?

AR: Oh, please; I've never thought of it that way, never thought of it that way. Every day was a present. A gift. You could be a different person all the time—it was really such fun! I never boiled it down that seriously; I just did the best I could and always tried to know not only my lines, but the other person's lines in any scenes that we did together. I learned to do that when I was doing a serial, because they shot so fast that sometimes the other person would forget to say something terribly important to the plot! So I could say, "Oh, you mean when you told me yesterday . . ." and then you'd say his lines and work them

into the dialogue. That was something I learned at the very beginning and it in came in very handily. I did a picture with Wallace Beery . . .

SS: WYOMING?

AR: Yes, and it was on location in Jackson Hole, Wyoming. On my first scene with Wallace Beery—it was a dialogue scene, of course—we rehearsed it and it was fine. The director, Richard Thorpe, yelled action and they started shooting. Wallace Beery had the first line and then, to my amazement, wasn't he delving into my lines?

SS: Stealing your lines, you mean?

AR: And I'm standing there with egg on my face! I just said, "Cut!" I'd never said that in my life before! (Laughs) The director looked at me like I was nuts, and I said, "I beg your pardon. I've come a couple of thousand miles to do a dialogue with Mr. Beery, and he has chosen to make it his monologue. If that makes sense to you, I think I'd better go back to California." The script girl spoke up and said, "She's absolutely right; he was saying her lines, too." So the director took Wallace over into a corner and had a little chat with him, and he never pulled that again!

SS: Beery knew everyone's lines, too!

AR: He had that trick, too, but in his case he wasn't dealing with an emergency. In a serial, it's an emergency. You only shoot it once.

SS: And you've got to get it right.

AR: So many things can happen. I remember one scene in the serial THE

FIGHTING MARINES, where they had a big old-fashioned touring car, and they said, "Now, you're to drive past the camera." And I didn't know how to drive! I didn't! They said, "Oh, it's all right. We'll start it and have a man on the floor beside you. No, there won't be room. Well, he'll be on the floor in the back. He's a good stunt man; it'll be all right." I thought, "God, I'm just going to look calm and collected." So I'm looking calm and collected, with a beam on my face, and I'm driving through a nice country road—and I hit a rut in the road. Well, the stunt man bounced right up in sight when I hit the rut. I didn't know; I just had a beam on my face. They left it in the movie; they said, "Oh, it goes so fast you don't even notice it." Meanwhile, I'm beaming! Somebody's kidnapped my brother and I'm off trying to rescue him with a smile on my face! (Laughs) I never did see the whole thing. Who'd want to sit through 12 episodes—oh, please! But life goes on. If I had realized I'd been living through the Golden Era, I'd have tried to enjoy it even more.

SS: In 1958, MGM made *ANDY HARDY COMES HOME* . . .

AR: Oh, please!

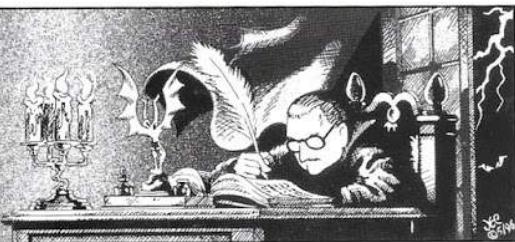
SS: . . . and you weren't in it.

AR: No, I flatly refused. I said, "Have you lost your mind?" I said, "In the first place, Andy Hardy would not grow up to be a judge. Andy Hardy would grow up to be Red Skelton! He'd have some-

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Crimson Chronicles

by Forrest J Ackerman



"HELP ME! HELP ME!" A tiny frightened strident voice emanates from a spider web in a garden. In the history of horror films it is equalled only by the choking Germanic cry of "Help! Help!" emanating from the throat of cornered child mass murderer Peter Lorre (The Lord High Minister of All that is Sinister) in Fritz (METROPOLIS) Lang's morbid masterpiece, "M."

We see a front view of Herbert Marshall raising a large rock over his head, about to dash it down on the unfortunate victim of the film, Al (later known as David) Hedison. By a daring scientific experiment gone awry (he meddled with things man was meant to leave alone), he has metamorphosed into a winged insect with the head and arm of a human being. Vincent Price, eventually to become Prince Prospero and The Abominable Dr. Phibes, was also a witness to this abhorrent transmutation.

The original story by George Langelaan was featured in—can you guess what magazine? Perhaps you were too young at the time, circa 1956, but it was—*Playboy!* It is remembered as the slay-boy issue and today is a collector's item along with Charles Beaumont's "The Crooked Man," Ray Bradbury's "Long After Midnight" (which became the legendary *Fahrenheit 451*), and Ray Russell's tale that was filmed resembling a modern version of Conrad Veidt's THE MAN WHO LAUGHS—"Sardonicus."

Years ago in France, in his Parisian villa, I had the privilege of spending an afternoon with George Langelaan. I remember him as a portly, amiable host in his forties, and what I particularly remember of my visit was the huge, fantastic painting that dominated one wall. Before I left, I had the honor of adding him to Beaumont, van Vogt, Melchior, Bradley, Curt (DONOVAN'S

BRAIN) Siodmak, and other of my distinguished clients.

The next year, 1959, THE RETURN OF THE FLY buzzed the screen for 78 minutes, shorter than the original's 94 minutes, with this time 'round the victim getting a fly leg as well as a head and hand. Vincent Price again graced the screen with his perfect presence.

THE FLY hibernated until 1965 when, according to Walt Lee's *Reference Guide to Fantastic Films*, there was a CURSE OF THE FLY, but unfortunately that is too far back for me to remember the plot... if there was one. I seem to recall it as pretty schlocky (and not as good as John Landis' SCHLOCK).

Of course, the remake of several years ago is too fresh in our memories to require much of a reprise here. With advanced techniques, the transformation sequences and makeup were more awesome than before.

There is a record of another FLY, an eight-minute amateur short, and a Yugoslavian FLY in 1967.

Most of my 300,000 piece collection has been scattered to the four winds as the result of my physical/financial disaster of 2002, but one thing I managed to save to display in the Ackermanimansion along with Bela Lugosi's stage Dracula cape, Ultima Futura Automaton the METROPOLIS robotrix, the last remaining Martian machine from WAR OF THE WORLDS, the brontosaurus that chased the man up the tree in the 1933 KING KONG, and the Beaver hat and ghoulish teeth of Lon Chaney from LONDON AFTER MIDNIGHT, is a magnificent fly with a human head designed by a devoted filmonster fan and presented to me by him. If he chances to read this, I hope he will contact me and let me know his name, so I can add it to his amateur masterpiece.

LEFT: David Hedison endures a creepy-crawly visit from a spidery friend (the arachnid who figures in the climactic scene of 1958's THE FLY) while getting ahead in the makeup chair at 20th Century Fox. RIGHT: Inspector Charas (Herbert Marshall) crushes the human-headed fly while François (Vincent Price) tries not to giggle.



HEAVEN & HELL

TO PLAY WITH

The Filming of

THE NIGHT OF THE HUNTER



by Preston Neal Jones

WINNER! Rondo Hatton Award

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BOOK ENDS

The Scarlet Street Review of Books

BENJAMIN KRITZER

Bruce Kimmel

1st Books Library, 2002

216 pages—\$14.50

Bruce Kimmel's *Benjamin Kritzer* is a coming-of-age story set in a particular time (the late 1950s) and place (Los Angeles) and peppered with period references (*I WAS A TEENAGE WEREWOLF* and *THE FLY*, Commando Cody rocket jackets, Chop-O-Matics, Five Day Deodorant Pads) that virtually defies itself to become more than an exercise in nostalgia. Yes, nostalgia there is, for those baby boomers who remember what it was like to attend a Saturday kiddie matinee or pre-theme park amusement pier, but Benjamin's story isn't shackled to its decade, and one can easily substitute *FRIDAY THE 13TH* if one was nine years old in 1980 instead of 1957, or the 1975 candy craze Pop Rocks for Benjamin's beloved Jujubes.

Kimmel knows his horror movies, especially the essential fact that the best monsters have something about them that demands a measure of sympathy. After all, they're victims of circumstances. It's not their fault that a ravenous creature of the night bit them on the neck or clawed their chest to ribbons. They had no hand in helping some deranged dwarf plop a criminal brain in their skull. They don't want to be bad, but their evil side sometimes takes over, transforming them into a vampire or werewolf or monstrous blobbie thing, or even—worst of all—a parent. Such a monster is Benjamin Kritzer's mother, Minnie Kritzer. There's very little to be said in defense of a woman who, in uncontrollable frustration, would strike her son with a wooden coat hanger, but Kimmel manages to say it, in so unobtrusive a manner that it comes as a surprise when the reader realizes that Minnie's motives, if definitely not her methods, are not invariably cruel. She's a woman with demons. She thinks those demons are her two children, especially young Benjamin, but the demons are internal. Yet she never says no when Benjamin asks for a transistor radio or wants to put on a show for his captive-audience family, or when he

begs an invitation for pretty Susan Pomeroy to join the Kritzers for Passover. (The Kritzers also celebrate Easter, leading Benjamin to write in a school essay: "Once upon a time in days of old there was a person named Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ said many wise things and people enjoyed Him very much. What Jesus enjoyed was boiling eggs... Sometimes Easter comes at the same time as Passover, and not only do we get to find gaily-colored Easter eggs, but we get to eat chopped liver, too.") Even the motivation for Minnie's worst betrayal, one that forever changes the dynamics of her troubled relationship with her "problem child," is a gray mix rather than the pure black of vicious bile or the spotless white of Mother love.

Minnie is just one of many memorable characters populating Benjamin's world. There's also semi-nudist dad Ernie, psychotic older brother Jeffrey, kindly Grandpa Kritzer, crazed grandparents Gus and Dottie Gelfinbaum, good teacher Mrs. Wallet, bad teacher Miss Brady, and, of course, Susan.

There isn't anyone—except those few who somehow skipped childhood entirely—who won't recognize a moment of their own lives in *Benjamin Kritzer*. The films Benjamin sees at the local Picfair and Lido movie theaters may for the most part be American International, but his story is Universal.

—Richard Valley

HAMMER FILMS: THE BRAY STUDIO YEARS

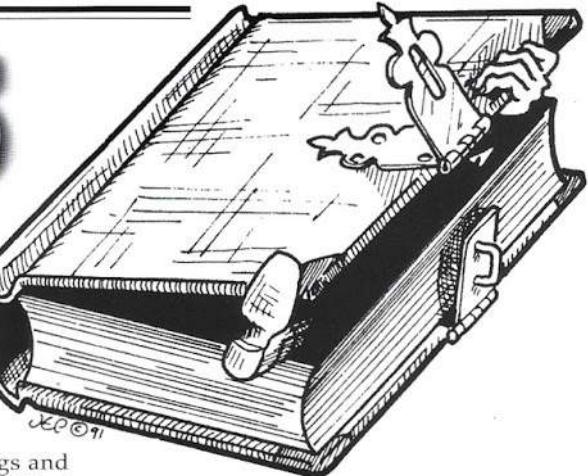
Wayne Kinsey

Reynolds & Hearns 2002

368 pages—\$35.00

Dr. Wayne Kinsey, editor of *The House That Hammer Built* magazine, brings his knowledge of all things Hammer to *Hammer Films: The Bray Studio Years*, said years being 1951 through 1966, when the company was housed at Bray. Many fans feel that this was Hammer's Golden Age, and when you look at the studio's growth and product during that period, one is hard pressed to disagree.

After a cursory overview of the studio's origin in the 1930s and its scant output during the 1940s, Kinsey sets out to explore the Golden Age. (The years 1951-1952 and 1953 to 1955 are combined, due to the relative lack of production.) Each feature is given detailed coverage, with such lesser-known flicks as *NEVER TAKE SWEETS FROM A STRANGER* (1959) receiving almost as incisive an examination as the better-known *Frankenstein* and *Dracula* films. Amazingly, considering the plethora of books and



mags devoted to Hammer, Kinsey still uncovers new facts, as well as presenting rare photos. Here's hoping that Kinsey will someday expand his final chapter into a second book, examining Hammer's productions from 1967 to today.

—Kevin G Shinnick

KENNY MILLER

Kenny Miller with Donald Vaughan

McFarland and Co., 2001

Box 611, Jefferson, NC 28640

214 pages—\$28.50

Devotees of genre film will probably be most familiar with Kenny Miller from his roles as Vic, the bongo-playing pal of Michael Landon in *I WAS A TEENAGE WEREWOLF* (1957) and as Stan, the dancing young mini-man from *ATTACK OF THE PUPPET PEOPLE* (1958). What many may not realize, however, is that Miller's career also includes such diverse credits as film roles in Orson Welles' *TOUCH OF EVIL* (1958) and Anthony Quinn's *THE BUCCANEER* (1958), television roles on *THE RAT PATROL* and *B.L. STRYKER*, various theater performances, a touring roadshow featuring the dance craze The Twist, and a string of successful record releases.

All this, and much more, is detailed in Miller's entertaining autobiography *Kenny Miller: Surviving Teenage Werewolves, Puppet People, and Hollywood*. Cowritten with free-lance film writer Donald Vaughn, the book breezily takes us through Miller's childhood upbringing by fundamentalist Christian parents through his Hollywood beginnings in a series of juvenile delinquent roles to mainstream success, fandom, and some difficult times late in his career. It's amazing that Miller transcended his parents' determination to deny him a career in entertainment. (They considered Hollywood a "modern incarnation of Sodom and Gomorrah.") Dying from leukemia, Reverend Miller's last words to his 16-year-old son were, "You'll never amount to anything!" Okay! So much for positive reinforcement!

Nevertheless, Miller persevered. With talent as a singer and dancer, he won a series of local talent contests, earned a gig on a radio show, then ran off to Tinseltown to pursue his goal. Just as he began making connections, how-



ever, he was drafted. Serving in Germany, Miller furthered his career by becoming entertainment director of the Sixth Infantry and appearing in the American/German teleseries *FLASH GORDON*. Success came to Miller on his return from the military, when he won roles (primarily as a juvenile delinquent or dancing teen) in *THE HUMAN JUNGLE* (1954), *RUNNING WILD* (1955), and *ROCKABILLY BABY* (1957). A favorite of the fan mags, Miller's photos graced their covers through the fifties and early sixties—the pinnacle of his career.

Filled with anecdotes about friendships and encounters with such diverse personalities as Orson Welles, Jackie Kennedy, James Dean, and the Shah of Iran, Miller's account of his rise from modest means to stardom and back to modesty is entertaining and informative.

—Al Baca

HEAVEN AND HELL TO PLAY WITH

Preston Neal Jones
Limelight Editions, 2002
304 pages—\$18.95

Those seeking ammunition in Preston Neal Jones' *Heaven and Hell to Play With: The Filming of The Night of the Hunter* for the endless battle over the auteur theory will find plenty of bullets—no matter what side you're fighting on. In a nutshell, the theory—which originated in France in the 1950s with François Truffaut and other writers for *Cahiers du Cinema*, and was actually called *la politique des auteurs*, American critic Andrew Sarris being the first to dub it a "theory"—posits that films have an individual auteur or author (usually the director), and thus can be read in the same manner as one reads a book by an individual writer. All those who contribute to the work are more or less relegated to the position of the means and material used by the auteur/author to write his film/book.

Time and again in *Heaven and Hell to Play With*, someone who contributed to the final work that is the film *THE NIGHT OF THE HUNTER* (1955)—producer Paul Gregory, writer Davis Grubb, actor Robert Mitchum, editor Richard Golden, art director Hilyard Brown, cinematographer Stanley Cortez—pays homage to the vision of director Charles Laughton, while time and again proving that Laughton's vision was sometimes their vision, and that they contributed to the finished film in ways never dreamt of by their auteur.

In no way should these revelations diminish Laughton's own exceptional work—his contribution to the film was by far the largest, and he was in a position to either approve or veto the work of his collaborators. Still, there's no denying that the ideas and concepts of his coworkers were their own, and that they play a vital role in the final product.

Author (or is it auteur?) Jones has spent decades gathering material for his book, which he presents in a precise, straightforward manner. He allows the dozens of filmmakers he interviewed to speak for themselves, but he doesn't

simply step aside and let them run riot over the film's history. His own voice, offering opinions and tying up most of the loose plot strands, is a strong, always welcome one.

If *Heaven and Hell to Play With* has a flaw, it's that there are two loose strands that need tying—namely, the absence of primary interviews with stars Shelley Winters and Billy Chapin. The voluble Winters is represented by remarks made elsewhere, but she contributed nothing specifically to this book, which leaves her rather like the wax dummy that substituted for her after she'd been murdered in the movie. We're told by participants that child actor Chapin loved making *THE NIGHT OF THE HUNTER* and that he was fond of Laughton, but Jones writes in the acknowledgments that Chapin "gave the project his blessing, though for personal reasons he was unable to participate . . ." Those reasons extend over a period of 20 years or so, and leave a mystery at the center of *Heaven and Hell to Play With*'s generous heart.

—Richard Valley

WHITE ZOMBIE

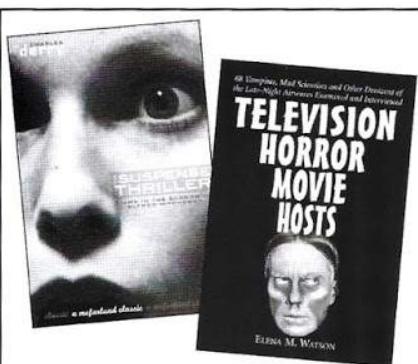
Gary Don Rhodes
McFarland and Co., 2001
352 pages—\$65.00

McFarland and Co. writers often joke that they can't always afford to buy their own books. They aren't entirely kidding! Sixty-five bucks is a big chunk of change to put down for a reference book such as Gary Don Rhodes' *White Zombie: Anatomy of a Horror Film*, but for Bela Lugosi fans it's essential. Is the book a "must have" for every film scholar or fan of old horror movies? For fans of *WHITE ZOMBIE* (1932), perhaps. For those who can't stand it, perhaps not.

Rhodes' massive reference book offers a fascinating look at independent filmmaking in the 1930s. For that alone, it belongs with such other in-depth studies of classic cult films as George Turner and Orville Goldner's *The Making of King Kong* (1975) and Aljean Harmetz's *The Making of The Wizard of Oz* (1977). *WHITE ZOMBIE* has never reached classic status, and probably never will. It has quite a number of flaws—some of the acting is terrible—but it has more than enough merit to justify Rhodes' excellent study. There is a great deal of information on independent filmmakers Victor and Edward Halperin, creators of *WHITE ZOMBIE*, that you simple won't find anywhere else.

The book is loaded with rare stills and illustrations. Even with all the material Rhodes has painstakingly compiled, however, he wasn't able to shed light on the late actor Clarence Muse's claim that Bela Lugosi, because of his star status in Hollywood, directed a number of *WHITE ZOMBIE*'s scenes. There are still some mysteries yet to be solved surrounding the film. However, what material there is in *White Zombie: Anatomy of a Horror Film*—and there's lots of it—makes for fascinating reading.

—Leonard J. Kohl



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DAVID FRANKHAM

Continued from page 47

SS: Did he resemble his portrayal in that film?
DF: He was charming, very handsome, very aesthetic, rather cynical about Hollywood in general and full of cautionary tales by way of advice to a 30-year-old novice. He did lighten up considerably when I told him, sincerely, that his *SHOW BOAT* was easily the definitive version and he chatted animatedly about its production. We left him smiling and waving rather sadly. A month or so later, he drowned himself in his pool and Doris was devastated. Ian McKellen was eerily accurate in his performance; he really caught the man's isolation and frustration. But I didn't see a Lynn Redgrave-type housekeeper lurking about. In fact, he served the tea by himself that day. So he was really my first connection with my favorite genre, as it turned out.

SS: You're in *MASTER OF THE WORLD*.
DF: Vincent suggested me for that one, likely because my character was bland, yet turns by literally stabbing Charles Bronson in the back. It is my favorite of the three with Vincent. Mark Damon had turned the role down on a Friday—I suspect because he lost the girl to Charles Bronson in the script—and I was rushed out to the studio late that afternoon, met director William Witney, and was told to report to wardrobe immediately to be in the first shot on Monday. I hardly had time to feel excited about doing a second movie with Vincent.

SS: Was filming more fun and games, as it was when you made *THE FLY*?

DF: Vincent joked right before the cameras would roll. There's a scene where you can see Mary Webster and me smiling, coming in for a scene where we're supposed to be terrified. (Laughs) I can see that every time I watch that film. His books are autographed to me: "Master of the World—and don't you forget it!" I enjoyed making that picture. We had community singing on the set! Henry Hull led us in singing old songs between takes, songs he had learned as a young man. He was a very gentle and kind man as well. We're in most of each other's scenes throughout. American International knew I was helping them out by working on such short notice, so they offered me a two-picture deal. It was a delight all the way through. It was not a big budget film, but it set out to entertain, and it did that.

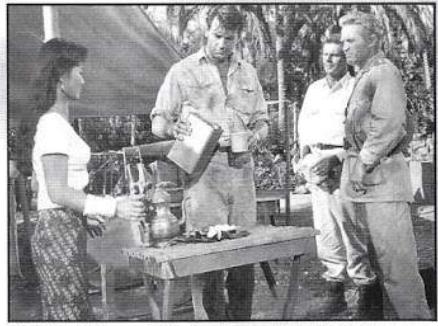
SS: Your second AIP picture was *TALES OF TERROR*, directed by Roger Corman.

DF: Roger Corman was terrific! He was very quiet, almost shy. It was understood that you got the scene right on the first take. There were three episodes in the picture. We did my segment, "The Facts in the Case of M. Valdemar," in one week, dawn to dusk. We did morning readings with Vincent, Debra Paget, and Basil Rathbone. I absolutely worshipped Basil from the 1930s on, when he whacked the living daylights out of young Freddie Bartholomew in *DAVID COPPERFIELD*. We were never off our

feet. Roger kept the film on budget by doing it like that. Because of the thorough rehearsal, we didn't need more than one take, but on some scenes that normally would have taken two or three camera takes, Roger would do in one. I had to run up the stairs with a camera rushing in front of me on tracks, break down the door, and it had to be right, because it took an hour to set up the thing with lights. It was a big challenge to the crew.

SS: Basil Rathbone was in his seventies by then. Did the fast pace bother him?

DF: I was absolutely amazed! Rathbone was about Vincent's height, as you can see in *TOWER OF LONDON*, and here I was nose to nose with him. It occurred to me halfway through filming that his whole attitude was young, even though he was in his seventies. That was his secret. I worried about him; the days were so long, but he never tired. As with Vincent, doing a scene with Rathbone meant praying that you wouldn't be wiped off the screen. Working with him was one of the great satisfactions of my life—I mean, he was Errol Flynn's and Tyrone Power's nemesis! I later worked with him on *DR. KILDARE*, and he took me on a tour of the studio, where he had worked with Greta Garbo and Norma



TOP: Mary Webster, David Frankham, and Vincent Price relax between takes on *MASTER OF THE WORLD* (1961). ABOVE: Judy Dan, Rock Hudson, Frankham, and Karl Swenson in *THE SPIRAL ROAD* (1962). BOTTOM LEFT: Frankham flips out on *TWELVE O'CLOCK HIGH*.

Shearer. He told me, incidentally, that Errol Flynn wasn't a very good swordsman. He was very good about leaping about, but he didn't know anything about the fine points of fencing. Basil had been taught well, and he said, "No, old Flynn had to use a double quite a lot!" Basil actually died working, touring in an Edgar Allan Poe show. Just as he would have wished, I'm certain.

SS: Maybe that inspired Vincent Price to keep going as long as he did?

DF: Vincent's sense of humor helped, no doubt. Halfway through *TALES*, Vincent growled in my ear that he'd worked with Debra Paget before. "I almost got to rape her in *THE TEN COMMANDMENTS* before John Derek killed me off!"

SS: Did you ever encounter any of your fellow performers again after working with them?

DF: I ran into Vincent Price once in 1976, at the Beverly Hills Post Office. He was in the middle of suing AIP because he felt they weren't paying him his royalties on all those films. He just took a nominal up-front fee, usually \$5,000, and then a percentage of the profits, which he said were immense, only you'd never know it by the meager checks they were sending him. In 1989, I attended a salute to Vincent on his 79th birthday at the Los Angeles Hilton. Roger Corman was there, too, so we three had a fine reunion. We hadn't seen each other for ages, so it was quite an emotional get-together. Vincent was frail and walked with the help of a cane, but his mind was sharp as always and he had the audience laughing from start to finish.

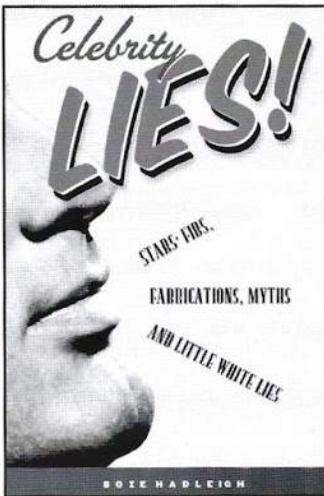
SS: Earlier, you mentioned the classic Jack the Ripper thriller, *THE LODGER*. Your



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credits include the Hammer film *HANDS OF THE RIPPER*.

DF: Yes, that was a feature filmed in England. The plot didn't make any sense at all, so Universal had me and another actor film an introduction to explain it! (Laughs) That was the extent of my involvement with that one.

SS: Your list of television credits, all of them featured or guest roles, is amazing.

DF: When you're fortunate enough, as I was then, to be active in Hollywood at a time when most series ran to 39 episodes, there was so much work available to all of us. I did hundreds of commercials from about 1964 to 1974. As for acting, I was so grateful for opportunities to specialize in characters who invariably fell apart. Roddy McDowall had—and justifiably so—first crack at every sizeable role in that category, and I've often felt that I was contacted only if he was otherwise engaged, but that in itself was very flattering. My peers didn't seem anxious to be typecast as weak characters, whereas I reveled in the freedom those roles gave me. Sometimes a director would say, "Here's where you fall apart, David, so do your thing and we'll use a handheld camera and just follow you around as you trash the set." (Laughs) Great fun!

SS: You didn't mind playing unstable men?

DF: Even with basically routine TV movies, an element of work I was given to do in *FLY* was apparent in scripts that I was considered for. In an episode of *THE GALLANT MEN*, a WB series, I played a shell-shocked British soldier opposite Dorothy Provine and got to do my obligatory screaming scene with her. She sang to me and I recovered! (Laughs)

SS: And in your *STAR TREK* episode, "Is There in Truth No Beauty," you went haywire opposite Diana Muldaur.

DF: My character nearly wrecked the Enterprise! My character even dropped dead! I keep meaning to make a video collage of all the times I came to a violent end. I seemed to specialize in expiring for awhile back then.

SS: In fact, your character's demise was one of the actual times when Dr. McCoy said, "He's dead, Jim."

DF: "Let's get Frankham; he does good death." That was a lot of fun, but shooting *STAR TREK* was also a sad affair, because we started the day the cast was told that the series had been cancelled. You never saw such a downhearted group of actors. They loved their work on that show.

SS: On a gentler note, you voiced a Disney animated character, Sgt. Tibbs, the Cockney cat who single-handedly initiates the rescue of the puppies in *101 DALMATIANS*.

DF: I knew my parents wouldn't be too enthusiastic about my role as a killer in *FLY*, so I auditioned with about half a dozen others and was delighted to hear a few days later that the role was mine. It was all very low-keyed and relaxed, with a great feeling of innocence about the whole project. I really felt so proud to see my name on a Disney film.

SS: And your voice can be heard in another classic film—*BEN HUR*.

DF: Ben Wright, who voiced Roger in *DALMATIANS*, recommended me for that. It was filmed in Italy, and when they got the film back to MGM, they could hardly understand any of the actors. William Wyler had to audition lo-

cal actors to dub the film, and Ben and I were the lucky ones, for weeks and weeks. Every other voice is either Ben or me! (Laughs) The editor who called for us was a legend, Margaret Booth, who did the 1935 *MUTINY ON THE BOUNTY*.

SS: You were on several episodes of *THE F.B.I.*, including one with Paul Lukas.

DF: He was a dear man and a wonderful actor; he won an Oscar for *WATCH ON THE RHINE*, and I was thrilled to be working with him. He absolutely despised fellow Hungarian Bela Lugosi, and said he gave Hungarian actors a bad name!

SS: Why did you leave acting?

DF: After 20 years of good steady work in a profession I really loved, I left Hollywood in 1976 and went back from time to time. In 1988, I did a stint on a CBS soap, just to prove to myself that I could do it. Although I was asked to resume my boring role of a minister later on, I declined and walked out of CBS Television City with no regrets, just a lot of wonderful memories for my years out there. It's what I'd wanted to do so urgently since I sat in the dark watching Laird Cregar and Doris Lloyd in *THE LODGER* back in 1944. So that door that Edward Bernds opened for me in *RETURN OF THE FLY*, stayed open for me at least two decades to come. I always maintain that I don't believe in luck, but rather being in the right place at the right time, as well as being well prepared for it when opportunity knocks. When I look back, I have to give heartfelt thanks that I was indeed in the right place for 20 years of the right time.



Kurt Neumann's *THE FLY* (1958) is as much a woman's weepie as it is a sci-fi flick, emulating such popular Douglas Sirk films as 1956's *WRITTEN ON THE WIND* (TOP LEFT, with Rock Hudson and Dorothy Malone) and 1954's *MAGNIFICENT OBSESSION* (BOTTOM LEFT, with Hudson and Jane Wyman). It also has much in common with the recent, Sirk-inspired *FAR FROM HEAVEN* (2002), directed by Todd Haynes.

THE FLY

Continued from page 55

this addiction, resulting in hundreds of thousands of deaths per year. The isolation of the individual is a huge part of the addiction process. The gradual disintegration of the self must be hidden from society—"covered for" by the dysfunctional family, if one exists—as it becomes more and more socially repulsive.

Part of what makes Seth's ultimate devolution into the fly mutation so believable and tragic is that it happens in the protected space of only two people, himself and his codependent lover (and, partially, the lovers each of them brings around). Had the film ended with the intervention of the police or doctors, believability would have gone out the window and rendered the film just another "monster movie." Once the monster goes public, he promotes only chuckles and pity as he struggles in the web and whines for help.

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Her heart goes out to Seth (they meet at a cocktail party), who is socially withdrawn, but cute, and who promises to show her something incredible. "You're not a very accomplished drunk," she tells him on the ride over, foreshadowing his rapid dissolving once he "tastes the forbidden." Unlike the Delambres, to whom secrecy from the female was all important, Seth is quick to share and explain every aspect to this equal-footing femme. Their full-disclosure relationship actually resembles that of Philippe and his own Ronnie in *RETURN OF THE FLY* more than, say, Andre and Helene in the original. There's an androgyny afoot; teleportation machines are now for everyone. The sexual revolution has left its mark. Women no longer have to be protected from such things; however, the sexual revolution has also left a legacy of drug abuse and sexual disease in its wake. It is this new set of problems that will drag this blossoming family down.

What begins as a beautiful romance gradually begins to crumble; the couple drifts further and further from normal society. Seth fuses with the fly on a molecular level, so he doesn't sprout wings or a bulbous fly-head, but his whole DNA has changed. The transformation starts with an euphoric increase of agility, strength, energy, and sex drive. Gradually, this gives way to physical decrepitude, an inability to leave the house, a loss of all concepts of reality, delusional suspicion, and madness. It's a typical arc of drug use—from all-time high to all-time low—all of it happening while Ronnie, the co-dependent spouse, looks on helplessly. No doctors are ever called in; Seth is allowed to sit around the house in his bathrobe, watching in semidetached horror as he devolves in the mirror.

There are several genuinely shocking moments in the film—in particular, the infamous pregnancy scene. After Ronnie realizes that she's pregnant with the deformed Seth's baby, she dreams that she gives birth to a squirming, giant maggot. The horrors of biology have always been at the forefront of Cronenberg's work, but here they take on a whole new invasive level, with Ronnie giving birth to an odious white phallus. The concept of the family, of birth, is revealed as repulsive; the lure of love leads inexorably to a trap, harnessing the once free but lonely spirit to an unrelenting cycle of gore-drenched transfiguration. Seth, meanwhile, having developed the ability to crawl on the ceiling and the walls, figures this

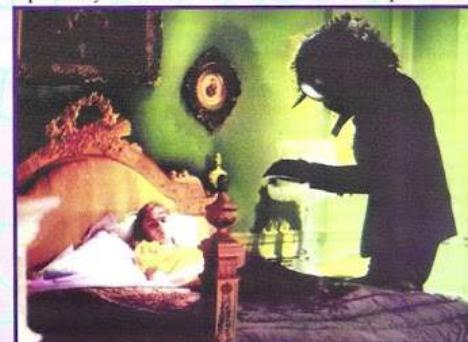
"may not be such a bad disease after all . . . a disease with a purpose"—like procreation itself. (Cronenberg claims inspiration from a poster that read "Sex is the invention of a clever venereal disease.") As he devolves further, Seth hits on the plan to add a third pod, and to prevent Ronnie from having an abortion by splicing her, the unborn child, and himself into one organism. "Help me to be human," he says. "We'll be the ultimate family, a family of three joined together in one body—more human than I am alone."

Surely one of the creepiest moments in all horror cinema comes when Brundle, who up to this point has been played by Goldblum in an oversize mutant suit, has his jaw come off in Ronnie's hand. His legs start to bend the wrong way, and the skin of his head splits open to reveal an animatronic "thing" with black, nonhuman eyes blinking behind it. Witnessing the transformation from Ronnie's perspective, the last traces of her disintegrating lover have been supplanted by a totally alien thing. Even the Wolf Man never lost as much humanity as Seth does in this moment. Brundle reminds one of a similar psychedelic searcher who goes too deep, Eddie Jessup (William Hurt) in *ALTERED STATES* (1980). The key difference is that when Jessup, having gone deeper than just reverting to an ape man, becomes a sort of human amoeba, he's still William Hurt in a silly-putty costume similar to the one worn by Seth prior to his full-on fly change. Seth goes it one deeper. The sudden abandonment Ronnie experiences in this moment is unbearably vivid and intense, the very definition of horror. There wouldn't be a better depiction of such painful, codependent romantic loss until *LEAVING LAS VEGAS* (1995) almost 10 years later.

All that superb acting and tragedy would be enough, but Cronenberg adds plenty of stomach-churning gore—ears falling off, Seth vomiting white digestive fluid on the hand and foot of Gina's ex, the giant maggot. It's quite a collection and, since the gallery of horror is witnessed only by a few, it maintains the identity of inter-family trauma. It has not yet gone public; police have not come in to take photographs; Inspector Charas and François are nowhere to be found. It's as though the original *FLY* began and ended with Helene, sobbing over the crushed press, alone forever. ***

A critical and box office hit, *THE FLY* invariably led to a sequel. Cronenberg wanted nothing to do with it, nor did Geena Davis—though footage of Jeff Goldblum as Seth Brundle (outtakes from *THE FLY*) appears in several videos that his son, Martin (Eric Stoltz), gets his hands on.

LEFT: In *RETURN OF THE FLY* (1959), Philippe Delambre (Brett Halsey) finally shows some interest in entering the boudoir of the lovely Cecile Bonnard (Danielle De Metz), but only after he's traded in his head for that of an insect. RIGHT: With the help of Inspector Beecham (John Sutton) and François Delambre (Vincent Price), Philippe zips his fly and reunites with Cecile for what promises to be a very dull marriage.



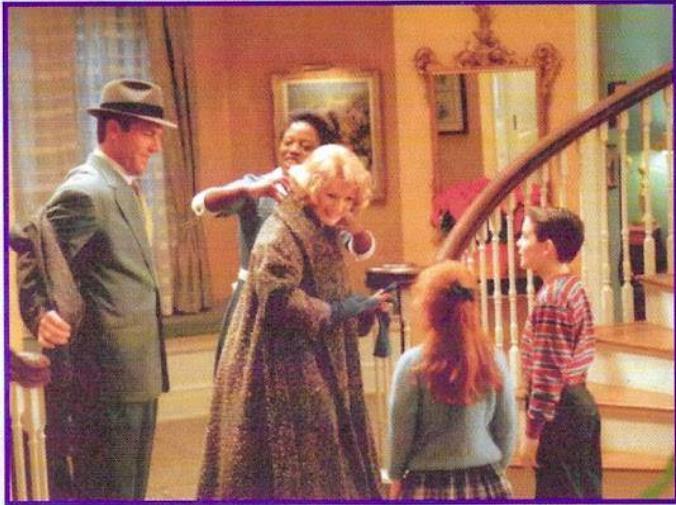
While definitely odd and in some ways hard to love, *FLY II* (1989) is not the turkey its reputation would have it. For one thing, it maintains a healthy fidelity to the 1986 film, following in its own way as a remake of *RETURN OF THE FLY*. As in *RETURN*, *FLY II* follows the story of the son, who in turn takes on both his father's job and his mutant genes. While Andre in the original was a married man with a son already five years old, here we have Ronnie giving birth to Seth's child at the very start of the film, in a sequence so shrill and unpleasant that it threatens to turn viewers off before they even make it to the opening credits.

Ronnie (Saffron Henderson replacing Davis) writhes in agony on an operating table, while a horde of dispassionate doctors stand around her. Above them, Stethis (John Getz, again) yells at another doctor, "You said it wasn't going to be like this!" It's a lot of unpleasant debriefing for fans of the Cronenberg *FLY*. In one fell swoop, we learn that Ronnie got back together with Stethis, that he convinced her to keep Seth's baby and sell it to these freaky med nuts, and that she's about to die in agony. The maggot baby she sees before dying turns out to be a cocoon-like embryo, which is parted to reveal a child underneath.

The child (named Martin, presumably in homage to Henri's son in *CURSE OF THE FLY*) grows up in the shelter of Bartok Industries, with Mr. Bartok (Lee Richardson) becoming a François-esque surrogate father. Martin learns and grows at an accelerated rate and is, at the age of five, already played by Eric Stoltz (who was likely cast as a result of 1985's *MASK*, which proved he could deliver pathos under latex). Stoltz is fine as the lad still smarting from seeing his pet lab dog emerge from a trial teleportation as a hand-chomping mutant puppet. (The mutant dog is pretty pathetic.) When he grows up a little more, Martin is presented with his own eighties-style pad near the labs, and it's not long before he even finds a girlfriend in the form of Bartok employee Beth Logan (Daphne Zuniga). As in most *FLY* films, the chemistry between the characters is more engaging and real than necessary. Together, Martin and Beth work on the teleportation pods—Brundle's chosen employment assignment—and slow dance in the inevitable montage to a forgotten pop song ("Lock, Stop, and Teardrops," by k.d. lang).

Things get explosive when Beth is transferred to a different town, after having sex with Martin. It turns out that Bartok has been spying on Martin's bed through

Continued on page 70



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There are several genuinely shocking moments in the film—in particular, the infamous pregnancy scene. After Ronnie realizes that she's pregnant with the deformed Seth's baby, she dreams that she gives birth to a squirming, giant maggot. The horrors of biology have always been at the forefront of Cronenberg's work, but here they take on a whole new invasive level, with Ronnie giving birth to an odious white phallicus. The concept of the family, of birth, is revealed as repulsive; the lure of love leads inexorably to a trap, harnessing the once free but lonely spirit to an unrelenting cycle of gore-drenched transfiguration. Seth, meanwhile, having developed the ability to crawl on the ceiling and the walls, figures this

"may not be such a bad disease after all . . . a disease with a purpose"—like procreation itself. (Cronenberg claims inspiration from a poster that read "Sex is the invention of a clever venereal disease.") As he devolves further, Seth hits on the plan to add a third pod, and to prevent Ronnie from having an abortion by splicing her, the unborn child, and himself into one organism. "Help me to be human," he says. "We'll be the ultimate family, a family of three joined together in one body—more human than I am alone."

Surely one of the creepiest moments in all horror cinema comes when Brundle, who up to this point has been played by Goldblum in an oversize mutant suit, has his jaw come off in Ronnie's hand. His legs start to bend the wrong way, and the skin of his head splits open to reveal an animatronic "thing" with black, nonhuman eyes blinking behind it. Witnessing the transformation from Ronnie's perspective, the last traces of her disintegrating lover have been supplanted by a totally alien thing. Even the Wolf Man never lost as much humanity as Seth does in this moment. Brundle reminds one of a similar psychedelic searcher who goes too deep, Eddie Jessup (William Hurt) in *ALTERED STATES* (1980). The key difference is that when Jessup, having gone deeper than just reverting to an ape man, becomes a sort of human amoeba, he's still William Hurt in a silly-putty costume similar to the one worn by Seth prior to his full-on fly change. Seth goes it one deeper. The sudden abandonment Ronnie experiences in this moment is unbearably vivid and intense, the very definition of horror. There wouldn't be a better depiction of such painful, codependent romantic loss until *LEAVING LAS VEGAS* (1995) almost 10 years later.

All that superb acting and tragedy would be enough, but Cronenberg adds plenty of stomach-churning gore—ears falling off, Seth vomiting white digestive fluid on the hand and foot of Gina's ex, the giant maggot. It's quite a collection and, since the gallery of horror is witnessed only by a few, it maintains the identity of interfamily trauma. It has not yet gone public; police have not come in to take photographs; Inspector Charas and Francois are nowhere to be found. It's as though the original *FLY* began and ended with Helene, sobbing over the crushed press, alone forever.

A critical and box office hit, *THE FLY* invariably led to a sequel. Cronenberg wanted nothing to do with it, nor did Geena Davis—though footage of Jeff Goldblum as Seth Brundle (outtakes from *THE FLY*) appears in several videos that his son, Martin (Eric Stoltz), gets his hands on.

LEFT: in *RETURN OF THE FLY* (1989), Philippe Delambre (Brett Halsey) finally shows some interest in entering the boudoir of the lovely Cecile Bonnard (Danielle De Metz), but only after he's traded in his head for that of an insect. RIGHT: With the help of Inspector Beecham (John Sutton) and Francois Delambre (Vincent Price), Philippe zips his fly and reunites with Cecile for what promises to be a very dull marriage.



While definitely odd and in some ways hard to love, *FLY II* (1989) is not the turkey its reputation would have it. For one thing, it maintains a healthy fidelity to the 1986 film, following in its own way as a remake of *RETURN OF THE FLY*. As in *RETURN*, *FLY II* follows the story of the son, who in turn takes on both his father's job and his mutant genes. While Andre in the original was a married man with a son already five years old, here we have Ronnie giving birth to Seth's child at the very start of the film, in a sequence so shrill and unpleasant that it threatens to turn viewers off before they even make it to the opening credits.

Ronnie (Saffron Henderson replacing Davis) writhes in agony on an operating table, while a horde of dispassionate doctors stand around her. Above them, Stethis (John Getz, again) yells at another doctor, "You said it wasn't going to be like this!" It's a lot of unpleasant debriefing for fans of the Cronenberg *FLY*. In one fell swoop, we learn that Ronnie got back together with Stethis, that he convinced her to keep Seth's baby and sell it to these freaky med nuts, and that she's about to die in agony. The maggot baby she sees before dying turns out to be a cocoon-like embryo, which is parted to reveal a child underneath.

The child (named Martin, presumably in homage to Henri's son in *CURSE OF THE FLY*) grows up in the shelter of Bartok Industries, with Mr. Bartok (Lee Richardson) becoming a Françoise-like surrogate father. Martin learns and grows at an accelerated rate and is, at the age of five, already played by Eric Stoltz (who was likely cast as a result of 1985's *MASK*, which proved he could deliver pathos under latex.) Stoltz is fine as the lad still smarting from seeing his pet lab dog emerge from a trial teleportation as a hand-chomping mutant puppet. (The mutant dog is pretty pathetic.) When he grows up a little more, Martin is presented with his own eighties-style pad near the labs, and it's not long before he even finds a girlfriend in the form of Bartok employee Beth Logan (Daphne Zuniga). As in most *FLY* films, the chemistry between the characters is more engaging and real than necessary. Together, Martin and Beth work on the teleportation pods—Brundle's chosen employment assignment—and slow dance in the inevitable montage to a forgotten pop song ("Lock, Stop, and Teardrops," by k.d. lang).

Things get explosive when Beth is transferred to a different town, after having sex with Martin. It turns out that Bartok has been spying on Martin's bed through

Continued on page 70



Scoring

THE FLY

by Harry H.
Long

Paul Sawtell's resume is packed with genre favorites, encompassing Republic serials, Universal Horrors, and Dick Tracy and Tarzan features—though he went uncredited on many assignments. He received onscreen acknowledgment for ANIMAL WORLD (1956), which led to a long association with Irwin Allen, including work on THE LOST WORLD (1960), VOYAGE TO THE BOTTOM OF THE SEA (1961), and the TV series based on it. Often paired with Burt Shefter, with whom he began collaborating in 1957 on THE BLACK SCORPION, the two continued working together until Sawtell's death a dozen years later, scoring IT! THE TERROR FROM BEYOND SPACE (1958), THE COSMIC MAN (1959), JACK THE GIANT KILLER (1962), and LAST MAN ON EARTH (1964). Their most famous collaboration, however, may be the three films that focus on the matter transporting activities of the Delambre family.

Several images from the original FLY films have achieved iconic value (notably the prismatic image of Patricia Owens) in inverse proportion to their actual quality. Herbert Marshall and Vincent Price had difficulty restraining their giggles for THE FLY (1958) and viewers will be similarly hard-pressed viewing the second installment's human corpse with white guinea-pig feet. THE CURSE OF THE FLY (1965) offers a grim mood and images (some worthy of Lovecraft), but is compromised by a parsimonious budget.

As usual, it was up to the composers to provide what the filmmakers couldn't. Sawtell and Shefter preferred a melodic style closer to scores of the previous decade than the brassy, dissonant music that marked most fifties fantasy films. Dramatic effects aren't eschewed, but are presented in less strident fashion, balanced with rich, unapologetic lyricism that underlines the love stories at the center of each film. THE FLY, in fact, is so lush that it could be easily mistaken for music from a Douglas Sirk soaper. Just after crashing horns open the "Main Title," luscious strings lead into a harp glissando and then the ravishingly beautiful love theme that is the foundation of the score. It even informs the turbulent brass that reappear in "The Claw" before resolving into a plaintive version for clarinet and strings.

THE RETURN OF THE FLY (1959) is an altogether darker score, though built on similar lines—the "Main Title" is even structured identically. It, too, is in a non-dissonant Romantic tradition, possessing a poignant, nearly mournful main theme; further darkness comes from the neutral Impressionistic passages that underscore a talky script.

Shefter soloed on THE CURSE OF THE FLY, the most gorgeous score of all. The "Main Title" is exquisite; languid strings are punctuated by the familiar brass, triumphant here before segueing to a piano concerto motif. Lilting strings and rippling harp are prominent in "The Romantic Week," which reprises the concerto passages, and exultant strings cap a rare, successful transport.

Percepto has done splendidly by its two-disc release. The sound quality is exceptional, all the more so considering the age of the materials, and the package is further graced by a beefy insert booklet. That none of these scores offer traditional horror writing makes them further worthy for their refreshing lack of cliché.

THE FLY

Continued from page 69

cameras hidden in the boy's stereo speakers. (Unlike François, Bartok is not a well-integrated, out-of-the-closet type, but a high-powered eighties update of peeping Norman Bates.) Much smashing and rampaging and taking it on the lam ensues. The lovers make their way to a remote Canadian province in search of Stathis. More than a little hard to like in the original, Stathis is now one of the most welcome faces in flydom, and is even given the film's best line. When Martin insists that Stathis should help them out of respect for his deceased father, Stathis calmly replies, "He stole my girl. He vomited acid on my hand and foot, dissolving them down to stumps . . . I have no love for the man." He's nice enough to loan the fugitives his jeep, but ere long, Martin is cocooning over and Beth calls Bartok for help. They're helicoptered back to the lab, where the evil scientists harp over Martin's now very gooey cocoon form. Beth, meanwhile, is held prisoner by Bartok, who's intent on torturing her for the password Seth entered into the disintegrator/integrator machines.

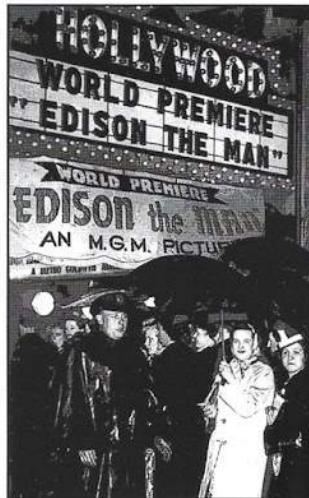
Seth hatches into a giant hulk-version of his father's final insect mutation form and seeks revenge. The suspense here is pretty nil; evil scientists are made to walk through unatmospheric lab halls lit with harsh industrial light, asking, "Who's there?" for long, tedious minutes before they're smashed and hurled about by the giant Brundle boy. Finally, it gets down to Bartok and his most vicious flunkies cornered in the telepod area, the animatronic figure of Martin Brundle stalking them. The scene is poorly staged and filmed, with no sense whatsoever of where the characters are in relation to each other. (The monster approaches Beth, who tries her best not to give him the look of horror that was such a bummer for Andre in the original. In the next shot, she's standing next to Bartok, who is looking all around for his mutant "son," who is nowhere to be found.)

Eventually, Martin gets to test his dad's theory of restoring his mutant chromosomes by teleporting both himself and his eighties-style amok-capitalist surrogate father together in one chamber. The result is a mutant mess of matter from which Martin emerges completely normal. Bartok, however, has inherited all the yucky genes. Beth embraces Brundle, while the evil father mutant winds up in the dog's cell. Bartok espies a fly on his dinner with his one good eye . . . and? Is the ending supposed to promise yet another sequel? Flies really have almost no role in the film. It's a dissatisfying conclusion, since we've come to like both Martin and Beth, and root for them living happily ever after. Much is left in the air in order to deliver the cheap shock "open" ending.

There are some interesting ideas about family in THE FLY II, which render it an extension of the themes developed in the earlier films. If Seth and Ronnie were trying to revive the forgotten family unit in Cronenberg's remake, here it has been revived, only in an utterly sterile, scientific environment, as cold as the flat lighting that accompanies almost every scene. The eighties era of family values mixed with runaway greed has molecularly fused the family with science and capitalism. The television stays ever on, and the isolated family receives their commercial instructions, drives to the mall, and consumes appropriately. Martin is raised in a "glass box" with cameras recording his every move, but at maturity his "father" gives him with his own place, and a job at the institute. The spied on becomes the spy. Study or be studied; there's no other role to play in the new nuclear family. After the smoke clears at the film's finish, we cannot imagine any other future for Martin and his girl but to rule Bartok Industries with a genetically enhanced iron fist. It's the family business, and has been for generations. The password Martin used on the machines turns out to be "dad," a way of trying to

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reconcile his longing for genuine support and paternal guidance with the fact that he doesn't really need it; he's already a well-adjusted monster, the "natural" product of a corporate-controlled scientific family.

A recent study was done in Quebec on the vanishing figure of the father in the Canadian family. In "La Marque Maternale," Collette Soler laments: "The Empire of the Father no longer exists, and one easily suspects it is because of science." The process of maturation within the family has been arrested due to the continued absence of the father, which has led to a gradual removal of the father's role in the home, until he becomes merely regarded as the eldest son. That this phenomenon is more Canadian than American is understandable, perhaps due to Quebec's "Frenchness." The still media-saturated U.S. culture will always regard bread-winning as the measure of the man, not presence; France is an older culture, with more ties to the mother. When man lets science take him out of the game, mom fills the void. In the FLY films, the Canadian (an American/French hybrid) father feels the need to outdo this powerful maternity with his science, to make the "greatest invention in the history of the world," to escape the bonds of nature by accelerating the pace of his out-of-control civilization to light speed. (Forget about stopping to smell the roses, now there won't even be a path to stop along!) The world hasn't asked the Delambres to do this, so they must keep it a secret from the world, until it "is ready." In the meantime, deep down in the basement, or in the cold labs of Bartok, they hear their long-since-devoured father's cry for justification. Not realizing they're listening only to their own insatiable inner longing, they make a regrettable attempt at union with a phantom. They keep their wives locked in the kitchen, or as mutants in the shed, or zonked out on sleeping pills. They even sacrifice the immediate, simple love offered by a cat, baboon, or lab dog in their woeful pursuit, like Hamlet clumsily offing all the wrong people in his fatherless quest for vengeance.

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Martin Brundle trusts in a father who peeps into his bedroom and mutates his pet dog; Martin Delambre trusts in a father who hates women and disfigures anyone handy in the name of science. In each case, the sons' misguided loyalty results in their own mutation, the sacrifice of their conventional happiness. In the original, Andre can't stay topside in his wife's world, basking in the garden, feeling God's presence in the sun on his face. Even after he's sure it works, he still has to go down into the basement one more time, and try his device on himself. Andre's ensuing absence creates a void for Philippe which, out of misguided loyalty, he fills with more weird science in adulthood. Blindly trusting—even, tentatively, loving—anyone in a lab coat, Philippe leaves himself open to betrayal; Ronnie forces him back into the teleporting "closet" and symbolically reunites him with Andre, in the form of a fly. When, in the remake, Seth feels his own Ronnie betray him (by temporarily running back to Stethis), he gets drunk and takes the fatal fly plunge himself. In each case, whatever amount of real love and connection they're awarded isn't enough. They want more, not realizing that such a need was never meant to be totally fulfilled. (In Alcoholics Anonymous, they call it "the God-sized hole.")

In trying to achieve perfect and eternal union with the world, the Delambres and Brundles end up fused with a fly, one of the smallest, vilest things in that world. It's a steep price to pay for not appreciating what's in front of you. In trying to use science to justify their misperceptions about family, love, and power—to create these things out of the air, on their own terms—the men of the Delambre and Brundle clans ultimately wind up trapped in the very web they'd been flying away from all their lives. There is no permanent detangling from this biological sticky trap, no light speed jet to beat the reaper. Freedom comes only in tiny moments—the warm affection of an unmutated dog or cat; the kiss from someone who truly loves you, flies and all; the disinclination to teleport yourself simply in order to feel like you've arrived.

THE CREATURE INTERVIEWS CONCLUDED

Interviews by Michael Michalski

RICOU BROWNING

Scarlet Street: ISLAND CLAWS was another film that you wrote with Jack Cowden. It was made in 1950, and featured eight-foot-long land crabs that roared loudly and killed everything in sight.

Ricou Browning: I didn't have anything to do with the filming, though. I don't even know where it was released! I haven't even seen it, as a matter of fact! (Laughs)

SS: *MR. NO LEGS* was another picture of yours with Jack Cowden, this time with you directing and Jack writing.

RB: I enjoyed that one. We shot it in 16mm with super-fast film. One night we did 89 setups, which was just about impossible to do. The kid who played Mr. No Legs was a Korean veteran, Ted Vollrath. He had no legs and was in a wheelchair and was a black belt karate fighter. He'd jump out of that chair and really do a number on somebody! Unfortunately, they ran out of money during the middle of shooting and we had to work free for a few days until we finally finished it. Once again, I've never seen the film.

SS: You received sole directing credit. How different are the two roles—director and second unit director—in terms of dealing with producers?

RB: Well, there's really no difference between the two roles whatsoever in relation with producers. They still try to have a lot of unnecessary input. A director today has more strength than they ever had before.

SS: Your *REVENGE OF THE CREATURE* costar, John Agar, was in the film.

RB: It was funny—I hadn't seen John since *REVENGE*. We became very close friends. He was one of the few people that I stayed in touch with a lot. He came down to do the part and I'm not sure he knew that I was doing it. We both showed up and saw each other, and it was wonderful! I really enjoyed it.

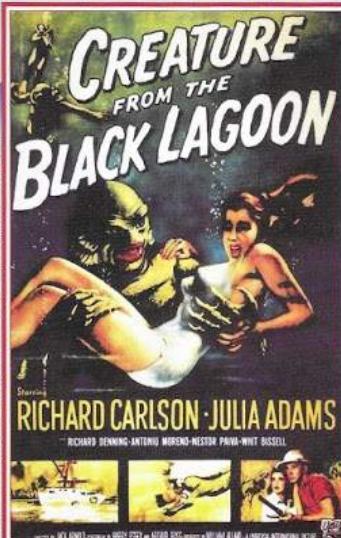
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SS: Was there anything you could do on *NEVER SAY NEVER AGAIN* that hadn't been possible on *THUNDERBALL*?

RB: Yes, but only in that we had underwater communication, whereas in

Continued on page 74



TOM HENNESSY

Scarlet Street: Playing the Creature resulted in later health problems, didn't it? Tom Hennessy: Yes, I developed kidney stones. I didn't know about it at the time, but Florida is probably the kidney stone capital of the country. There's something about the water. I was doing some diving with friends in Baja, California, after I got back from filming and I had an attack underwater. We were miles and miles from any road, and they had to get me to a hospital. They got me back to the border—it was about a five-mile trip—and from there to Scripts Hospital in Lahoya, which is one of the finest hospitals in the world. They said that I had acute gastritis. I went home and, after a few days, I was feeling pretty good. So I went back and the same damn thing happened! When I got to the hospital, I could barely see or hold my head up. I had polio, and this felt similar or just as bad as polio—and I damn near died from polio! It was early in the morning, about daybreak, and the intern was still on duty before the day's activities began—but, boy, was he sharp! He said immediately that I had kidney stones. When I got back up north, he said, I should see my urologist. They put me in the hospital and they thought I was coming along okay. Then, on Thanksgiving Eve, I got sicker than hell! They thought I was dying! My temperature rose to 106, and I needed emergency surgery. They packed me in ice and called a priest to give the last rites—geez, I was a goner! (Laughs) I was still conscious when they started cutting on me, and it took the surgeon so long to get in there. He said, "Tom, unfortunately you're in such good shape that I can't do what I'd normally do and work through the muscle tissues. I'm going to have to make a straight cut. You're going to have a hell of a scar." I have a scar there that's unbelievable! That's one of my legacies from being the Creature from the Black Lagoon!

SS: Horrible! Did you ever have anything worse happen as a result of your work on a film? TH: There are horrible things that happened, but it's all part of the game when you're a stunt player. I've had broken bones and a lot of cuts and lacerations and bruises over the years, but I never had anything as serious as on *REVENGE OF THE CREATURE*.

Continued on page 75



Monster-makin' and all things "creature" have always come naturally to popular artist/writer Arthur Adams. Logically—and on behalf of the genre, luckily—Adams also became the first artist to faithfully adapt Universal's classic *CREATURE FROM THE BLACK LAGOON* (1954) to the medium of the comic book (Dark Horse, 1993), a nearly unheard-of feat for a movie nearly 40 years old at the time.

At one time, the comic-book movie adaptation was a staple for film fanatics of all ages who wished to relive a fave flick, but the era of home theater has relegated the form to rare accessory status. Thanks to technological movie-making advances allowing for the depiction of characters and situations unachievable only a decade or so ago, the role of comics and movies is nearly reversed, with filmmakers looking to the endless library of comic heroes and villains (X-MEN, SPIDER-MAN, DAREDEVIL) for the latest screen fodder.

Produced in conjunction with similar comic-book stabs at other Universal icons—Count Dracula, The Frankenstein Monster, and Im-Ho-Tep the Mummy—the books were originally intended for sale in the various Universal Theme Parks. Then the initial sales figures began trickling into the Dark Horse offices.

"I drew the *Creature* pages twice-up, which means it was twice the size of a normal page. I wanted the pages to be larger so I could get as many panels in per page, get as many reaction shots—all that kind of stuff."

Creature's growing popularity eventually led to a reprinting of the

**CREATURE OF THE COMICS
ARTHUR ADAMS**
interviewed by Michael Michalski

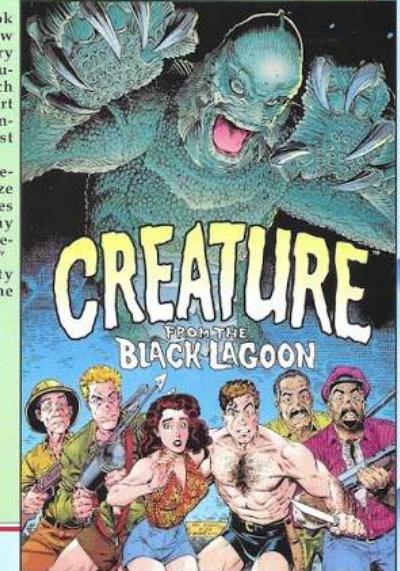
book, followed by another rendering coupled with Adams' *Godzilla Color Special #1* (1992) and some of his creator-owned series (*Monkeyman* and *O'Brien*) in a 1996 release entitled *Art Adams' Creature Features*. (Further evidence of Adams' passion for the horror genre is obvious in the naming of his character of Darrow O'Brien, an amalgam of the Fay Wray role Ann Darrow from 1933's *KING KONG* and stop-motion effects pioneer Willis O'Brien.) "I think I only had to cut out one scene from the movie to make it fit. I think it turned out okay," claims the modest artist, adding that his *Creature* was chosen by the prestigious Joe Kubert School of Cartoon and Graphic Art as prime example of comic book storytelling—allegedly, says Adams.

"That's pretty neat. You know, that was something someone told me—they could have just been blowing smoke up my ass, but I bought it. I thought it sounded pretty nice. Anyone who brings me a copy of the *Creature* at conventions say that, whenever they find them, they buy extra for people they know—they really like it. That seems to be one of my more respected jobs."

Bursting on to the comics scene in 1985 with the Marvel Comics six-issue limited series *Longshot*, Adams solidified his reputation in a memorable three-issue run on *Marvel's Fantastic Four* (#347-349), along with *Monkeyman* and *O'Brien*, which came close to being turned into a feature film by Disney in the late nineties.

"Supposedly, they really wanted to do *Monkeyman*," claims Adams, "but

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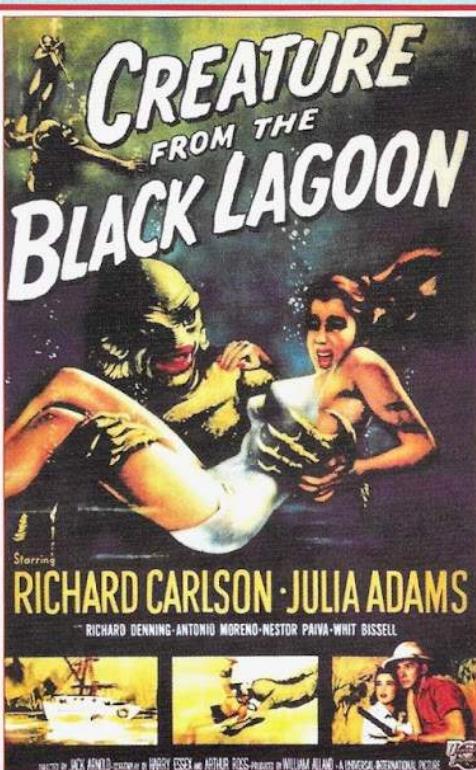
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THUNDERBALL we worked with hand signals. We also had experience with working with sharks from THUNDERBALL and shows with Ivan Tors.

SS: Do you ever get over the fear of working with something as large and dangerous as sharks?

RB: In my opinion—and it's only my opinion—anybody who says they're not afraid of working with sharks is either lying or crazy! (Laughs) You have a great deal of respect for them, and when you work with them, you work with them as carefully as you can. I've worked with sharks a lot. I've been around people who have dealt with sharks in scientific means, and then you deal with people who say sharks are friendly and they won't bother you and more than likely you'll get struck by lightning before a shark will bite you—well, the person who just got bit doesn't know that! Somebody is wrong! Either sharks bite you or they don't bite you—and apparently they do bite you!

SS: You also worked on the second unit on, of all things, *POLICE ACADEMY 5* in 1988.

RB: We had a scene that I will never forget. They had to have a scene where a guy hits a golf ball and it hits a bird, knocking it off a branch. I had to do the shot of the golf ball hitting the bird. We got this big bird, like a big crow, and we

TOM HENNESY

Scarlet Street: Playing the Creature resulted in later health problems, didn't it?

Tom Hennesy: Yes, I developed kidney stones. I didn't know about it at the time, but Florida is probably the kidney stone capital of the country. There's something about the water. I was doing some diving with friends in Baja, California, after I got back from filming and I had an attack underwater. We were miles and miles from any road, and they had to get me to a hospital. They got me back to the border—it was about a five-mile trip—and from there to Scripts Hospital in Lahoya, which is one of the finest hospitals in the world. They said that I had acute gastritis. I went home and, after a few days, I was feeling pretty good. So I went back and the same damn thing happened! When I got to the hospital, I could barely see or hold my head up. I'd had polio, and this felt similar or just as bad as polio—and I damn near died from polio! It was early in the morning, about daybreak, and the intern was still on duty before the day's activities began—but, boy, was he sharp! He said immediately that I had kidney stones. When I got back up north, he said, I should see my urologist. They put me in the hospital and they thought I was coming along okay. Then, on Thanksgiving Eve, I got sicker than hell! They thought I was dying! My temperature rose to 106, and I needed emergency surgery. They packed me in ice and called a priest to give the last rites—geez, I was a goner! (Laughs) I was still conscious when they started cutting on me, and it took the surgeon a long time to get in there. He said, "Tom, unfortunately you're in such good shape that I can't do what I'd normally do and work through the muscle tissues. I'm going to have to make a straight cut. You're going to have a hell of a scar." I have a scar there that's unbelievable! That's one of my legacies from being the Creature from the Black Lagoon!

SS: Horrible! Did you ever have anything worse happen as a result of your work on a film?

TH: There are horrible things that happened, but it's all part of the game when you're a stunt player. I've had broken bones and a lot of cuts and lacerations and bruises over the years, but I never had anything as serious as on *REVENGE OF THE CREATURE*.



Monster-makin' and all things "creature" have always come naturally to popular artist/writer Arthur Adams. Logically—and on behalf of the genre, luckily—Adams also became the first artist to faithfully adapt Universal's classic *CREATURE FROM THE BLACK LAGOON* (1954) to the medium of the comic book (Dark Horse, 1993), a nearly unheard-of feat for a movie nearly 40 years old at the time.

At one time, the comic-book movie adaptation was a staple for film fanatics of all ages who wished to relive a fave flick, but the era of home theater has relegated the form to rare accessory status. Thanks to technological movie-making advances allowing for the depiction of characters and situations unachievable only a decade or so ago, the role of comics and movies is nearly reversed, with filmmakers looking to the endless library of comic heroes and villains (X-MEN, SPIDER-MAN, DAREDEVIL) for the latest screen fodder.

Produced in conjunction with similar comic-book stabs at other Universal icons—Count Dracula, The Frankenstein Monster, and Im-Ho-Tep the Mummy—the books were originally intended for sale in the various Universal Theme Parks. Then the initial sales figures began trickling into the Dark Horse offices.

"The *Creature from the Black Lagoon* is the only comic I've ever done that has lost money for the company," confesses the affable Adams, although his contribution was barely given a chance to reverse the red. Slotted third behind the initial releases of *Dracula* and *Frankenstein* (neither of which involved Adams and of which he apologetically critiques, "I really didn't think they were very good. I didn't think they were particularly good adaptations of the movies"), the books fared poorly sales-wise, resulting in the slashing of both the projected print run and advertising budget for Adams' *Creature* release. (*The Mummy* endured a similar fate.)

But you just can't keep a good Gill Man down . . .

Fans and critics praised the book immediately on release (it's now highly collectible on the secondary market), particularly Adams' meticulous, entertaining pencils, which were brought to a high level of art through the "twice-up" approach undertaken by the artist for the first time in his career.

"I drew the *Creature* pages twice-up, which means it was twice the size of a normal page. I wanted the pages to be larger so I could get as many panels in per page, get as many reaction shots—all that kind of stuff."

Creature's growing popularity eventually led to a reprinting of the

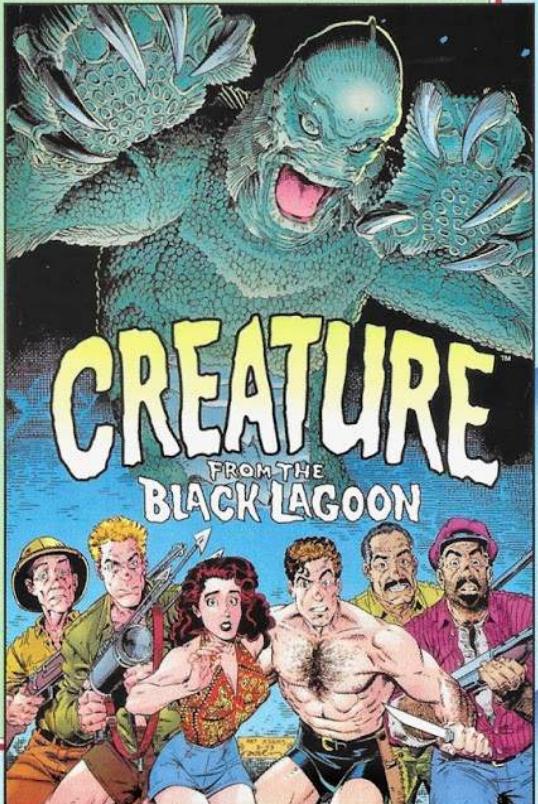
book, followed by another rendering coupled with Adams' *Godzilla Color Special #1* (1992) and some of his creator-owned series (*Monkeyman* and *O'Brien*) in a 1996 release entitled Art Adams' *Creature Features*. (Further evidence of Adams' passion for the horror genre is obvious in the naming of his character of Darrow O'Brien, an amalgam of the Fay Wray role Ann Darrow from 1933's *KING KONG* and stop-motion effects pioneer Willis O'Brien.) "I think I only had to cut out one scene from the movie to make it fit. I think it turned out okay," claims the modest artist, adding that his *Creature* was chosen by the prestigious Joe Kubert School of Cartoon and Graphic Art as a prime example of comic book storytelling—allegedly, says Adams.

"That's pretty neat. You know, that was something someone told me—they could have just been blowing smoke up my ass, but I bought it. I thought it sounded pretty nice. Anyone who brings me a copy of the *Creature* at conventions say that, whenever they find them, they buy extra for people they know—they really like it. That seems to be one of my more respected jobs."

Bursting on to the comics scene in 1985 with the Marvel Comics six-issue limited series *Longshot*, Adams solidified his reputation in a memorable three-issue run on Marvel's *Fantastic Four* (#347-349), along with *Monkeyman* and *O'Brien*, which came close to being turned into a feature film by Disney in the late nineties.

"Supposedly, they really wanted to do *Monkeyman*," claims Adams, "but

Continued on page 77



CREATURE OF THE COMICS ARTHUR ADAMS

interviewed by Michael Michalski

RIGHT: Ricou Browning suits up as the bubbly beastie. **FAR RIGHT:** "The Creature gets bigger and bigger everywhere!" He's "George in Georgia!" **BOTTOM LEFT:** Browning not only created FLIPPER (1964), but was responsible for SALTY (1974).

RICOU BROWNING

Continued from page 72

were shooting soft ping pong balls out of the barrel of an air gun. We shot this soft ping pong ball at him, and the first shot stuck right on his beak! And he sat there, looked, turned his head and walked right off the branch! I said, "Cut! We couldn't beat that in a million years!" Later, we watched the dailies with everyone—the producer, the director, myself—and that scene came up. Everybody started laughing and said, "How did you do that?" I said, "I don't give away my secrets!" (Laughs)

SS: Who are some of the friends you've made in the film business?

RB: Well, I never had many close relationships. John Agar was one of my closest friends in the business. Most of the people that I became very close with worked behind the scenes, like Ivan Tors. I also did the film LUCKY LADY, with Burt Reynolds, Liza Minnelli, and Gene Hackman. Burt and I have been friends for a long time. He went to Florida State University and I went there, too. I used to hire him for FLIPPER and GENTLE BEN when he needed work. I did the second unit on LUCKY LADY, and we did a boat sequence where 40 boats were fighting 40 boats. That was more fun than a barrel of monkeys! We had a great time filming that!

SS: Your son, Ricou Jr., did some stunt work of his own for a time.

RB: When I did SALTY, he doubled the actor underwater. When I did FLIPPER, he was nine and doubled Luke Halpin. Now, he owns a lot of boats and is in partnership with another man. They do marine coordination on film.

SS: How many children do you have, Ricou?

RB: I have four children and 10 grandchildren. My other son, Kelly, is in construction, but he was involved in the film



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CREATURE FROM THE BLACK LAGOON

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business and did two or three pictures in Russia. He worked behind the scenes, assistant director work. My daughter, Renee, was one of the trainers of Salty. My other daughter, Kim, is a nurse.

SS: Are you entirely comfortable talking about your career in the movies?

RB: It doesn't bother me one way or the other. I mean, it was what I used to do—and still do, if I can. I'll reminisce sometimes with my buddies.

SS: Are you still active as a diver?

RB: I still dive, but only what I want to do, when I want to do it. A friend was at one of these dive shows, and he met this group called the Elite Swamp Divers. They wanted to use the Creature as a swamp diver symbol, a class of diver. He asked me, but I said, "I can't tell you whether you can use the Creature's likeness. That's Universal's rights, not mine. As far as I'm concerned, you can do whatever you want, but you have to get permission from them." Later, they sent me a patch, like you sew on a shirt, with a picture of the Creature. It says "Swamp Diver." They also sent me a certificate making me an honorary Swamp Diver. They're based out of Texas and are very active.

SS: A remake of CREATURE FROM THE BLACK LAGOON has been announced.

RB: They were going to remake it several years ago. Jack Arnold was involved the first time, because he called and wanted to know if I wanted to get involved. I said, "Sure." But then Jack got very ill and passed away. I heard they were going to do another one, but that's all I heard. If they want to do a remake, that's fine. That's their business. They own the rights.

SS: Looking back after years of film experience, is there anything you would do differently as the Creature?

RB: No. I was very pleased with what I did and very pleased with what Ben Chapman did. I was also very pleased with the film. I thought it was very well done for the time.

SS: What is a typical day for you, now?

RB: I do a lot of writing on my computer. I also have a pet goose that I train and

may do something with later. That's about it. I've got a book I haven't finished. Writing is hard for me. I've got five scripts that are finished and I keep redoing them, trying to make them better. I enjoy it. I live with my wife of 20 years, Fran, our two dogs—a shepherd and a Doberman—and three chickens. And we get a load of grandchildren every now and then. (Laughs)

SS: Ben Chapman attends a lot of horror conventions. Do you ever go to any?

RB: I went to one in Orlando. Very nice people. My wife and I spent two days. I've had a lot of people call about going to these things, but I'm not really that interested. You sit there all day and talk about yourself. Who needs it?

SS: Having played such a significant character as the Creature, what's your take on modern horror movies?

RB: Well, I don't watch horror movies that often, but some that I've seen contain too much gore, I think. You see somebody's head cut off and blood spurting out. I don't think kids need that, but to each his own. If they make money—and I guess they do—that's why they do it. I enjoy movies, period. Some good, some bad—but I enjoy them.

SS: CREATURE FROM THE BLACK LAGOON is fast approaching its 50th anniversary. It's next year, in fact.

RB: It doesn't seem like that long!

SS: Other movies celebrating this milestone have had gala rereleases and other events of that sort.

RB: Well, the movie was released on DVD, and that's very good. I don't know what else it deserves. It was just a movie. As far as I was concerned, it was just a job. I did my job and got paid very little, considering money today, with no residuals. It was something I didn't remember until everybody started sending me letters saying they wanted pictures signed and all that baloney.

SS: Is there anything you wish you could do over again in terms of your career?

RB: No, not really. I've enjoyed everything that I've done. I did it as best I could—and that's it.



TOM HENNESY*Continued from page 72*

SS: Let's get back to the many child actors that you taught.

TH: Quite a few were very bright, but they weren't very good students. Natalie Wood was a very good student—she was very, very smart. Sal Mineo was absolutely a dunce! Of course, Sal got into that homosexual scene. I guess he was that way before he came to Hollywood, but he didn't act that way around me. It eventually ended in his demise. Unfortunately, that happens to a lot of those guys—it's pitiful. Tommy Rettig was a pretty good student, but Joey Vieira, who was the fat kid on the *LASSIE* show, wasn't. He was a tough kid to handle. He was out of control. He was related to Rudd Weatherwax in some way. That's how he got on that show, because Rudd owned Lassie. His parents were rough, tough people and the kid was a bully. He had to have somebody as his teacher like myself. I'd say, "Hey, I want to teach you how to develop your grip." We'd shake hands—he'd try and squeeze my hand—and I'd goddamn near break his hand! I'd worked for several years at one of the provision camps here in Malibu. I had the roughest juvenile kids and students in the Los Angeles area. It was maximum security and I had the worst of the worst. I had to develop ways of handling them without being abusive and without getting myself in trouble. I'd

coach them in boxing, open-hand, and I'd just slap the shit out of them. I had really big black guys who were damn near as big as I was, and they were in for heinous things. It was awful. But I did very well with them. Anyway, I used that experience to good advantage on these spoiled kids who were working in the studios. I had a thing called the "motorcycle grip." I'd have them falling down on the ground before they knew what happened to them! I became legendary in the motion picture division of special schools.

SS: *Annette Funicello was also a student.*

TH: I didn't work with her one on one; it was always with a group. She was a Mouseketeer and I worked with them several times. In fact, before Disneyland opened we shot there for two weeks in Anaheim, and I had Annette and Tim Considine and all sorts of kids who were under contract to Disney. I worked on *SPIN AND MARTY* quite a bit and Annette had a role as one of the girls over in the girls' camp. We used to shoot out at the Golden Oak Ranch. I became very friendly with the Corcoran family, who had the little kid, Moochie—Kevin Corcoran.

SS: *Did you find, as an educator, that your tactics proved effective?*

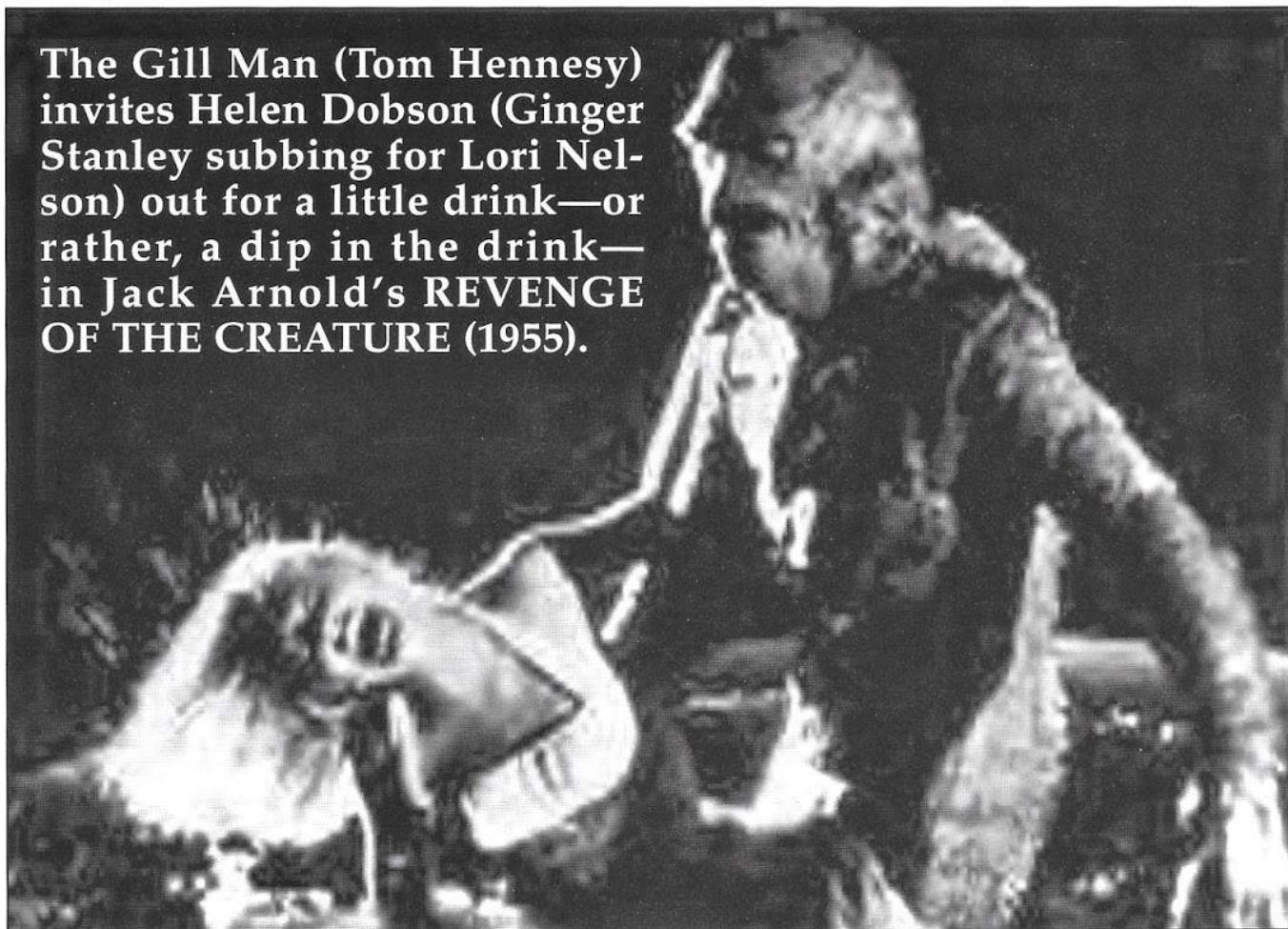
TH: Most of the kids benefited. Ethan Wayne certainly did. After his mother, Pilar, and Duke were divorced, Ethan lived with his mother, but would visit his

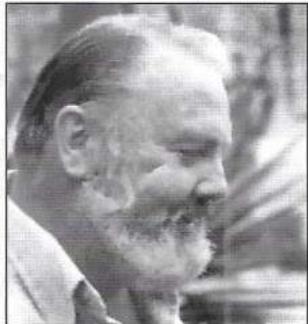
father. But Ethan wasn't a good student and they put him in a private school—the Barkley School. Ethan was at the bottom of the line. When we made a picture in Mexico—*BIG JAKE*—I worked as his teacher and I also played a part. Well, when he went back to school—hell, he was at the top of his class and they couldn't believe it! Ethan was babied, that was his problem. Duke was a lot older when Ethan was born than he'd been with his other kids. He'd only lived with his family for the first few years of the eldest children's lives. Ethan was his last kid, and he felt he had let the others down by not being with them.

SS: *Did you also know the man Natalie Wood married—Robert Wagner?*

TH: I worked on Robert Wagner's first picture—*PRINCE VALIANT*. After that, I didn't meet him again for years. I went to church one Sunday morning at Our Lady of Malibu—I'm a parishioner—and afterwards I went to the only supermarket we had in the area. I was getting out of my car and I saw this girl sitting in the car next to me, and I recognized it was Natalie. So she rolled the window down and we talked. She was married to Wagner and was going to have a baby. Then, Wagner came out of the supermarket and, God, was he hostile! Of course, I could have taken him and bounced him around like a damn yo-yo, which he didn't like, either. Natalie introduced me as her high school teacher. So he said,

The Gill Man (Tom Hennesy) invites Helen Dobson (Ginger Stanley subbing for Lori Nelson) out for a little drink—or rather, a dip in the drink—in Jack Arnold's REVENGE OF THE CREATURE (1955).





Tom Hennessey

"Yeah, okay; well, we've got to get going"—and he didn't even say good to meet you or anything else and drove off. I never saw Natalie again.

SS: The three young stars of *REBEL WITHOUT A CAUSE* all died tragically. James Dean died in a car crash, Sal Mineo was murdered, and Natalie Wood drowned.

TH: They talk about how afraid she was of the water and that she'd been that way ever since she was a kid. Well, when I was under contract, I appeared in two or three magazine layouts with Natalie and other actresses. Anyway, she started playing around, splashing. We went out in the damn water and Natalie wasn't afraid of water at all! I'd met Christopher Walken and I knew he was a screwball; I think he's one of the people we've been talking about. He was with Natalie and Wagner the night she died. I wouldn't be surprised if she was done in by those guys. They were drunk. They were drinking to beat hell that night.

SS: Let's talk a little more about *REVENGE OF THE CREATURE*.

TH: You won't believe it, but I didn't even see that movie 'til this year. It was the same thing with a lot of my pictures. I'd never go to the theater to see them. I'd see the rushes if I was invited by the director or assistant, but that would be it.

SS: Wasn't there trouble with the scene in which the Creature revives in the tank?

TH: When I revived, I attacked Bromfield, and later I killed him. Anyway, we did the segment where I was running amok and they're trying to get that rope net on me. The guys were all local and a couple of them were big, heavy guys—and they were trying to drown my ass! It was incredible! I mean, they were serious—this was a real goddamn Creature and if he got loose he was going to kill everybody! So I thought, "The hell with this! These guys are getting unacceptable here." I took one guy—the biggest guy—and got hold of him by the thigh and his upper arm, was able to get him up in the air, and I slammed him into the side of the tank. Boy, he was disabled! Then I smashed the shit out of a couple of other guys. You know, when you're working with guys who aren't experienced or trained, they don't know what to do. That's where

people get hurt. Those incidents got the filming off to a bad start.

SS: Any other incidents?

TH: That first day going into the tank was an unsettling thing. There were big damn sharks in there, and sawfish and the turtles—those huge turtles! They tried to eat that goddamn suit because they fed em cabbages, so they had to have guys with poles to try and ward them off. I was in the tank a few times, like when I escaped and so forth. I did a foolish thing, but I was intrigued. They'd just brought in a couple of tiger sharks. One of them was easily twice as long as I was! I was friendly with one of the photographers with the local union, and I talked this guy into taking pictures of me through the window of the tank without the suit on. I went down into that tank, not knowing what was going to happen, and these sharks were swimming around and around. I knew the turtles were something to worry about, too. Well, this goddamn big tiger shark—with another one right beside him—came right up beside me! The guy got some really good pictures of that.

SS: Even though you didn't land the role of the Gill Man in *THE CREATURE WALKS AMONG US*, you managed to make an appearance of sorts.

TH: I was told that they were having trouble coming up with the proper sound for the Creature's roar—they tried lions and gorillas and all kinds of stuff—and that they used my voice throughout *REVENGE OF THE CREATURE* and *THE CREATURE WALKS AMONG US* as well. I never checked into it, but it makes me mad as hell! I should have gotten residuals off of that!

SS: Were you approached about playing the Gill Man in the third film?

TH: There was some talk about it, but I'd alienated myself by making comments about Jack Arnold. Jack was a party guy. He was a skinny, homely little guy, but he was the big shot with all the pretty girls around—especially in that scene in the restaurant. By the time they got the suit off me and I got to the restaurant, Jack Arnold was having a big party with all these people. That was right after I'd almost been killed filming that scene on the buoy, and Jack was having a party!

One of the grips was goddamn near going to strangle Jack Arnold! He said, "You should be ashamed doing what you're doing when you almost caused a guy to die!" They wrapped and we didn't shoot again in Jacksonville. They went back to the studio and finished everything there.

SS: Ben Chapman and Ricou Browning both had some amusing tales about their stints in the Creature suits. Did you have any opportunity to play any pranks?

TH: Hell, no! I didn't have any time to be thinking about pranks. Ben Chapman didn't have that much to do and it was easy for him. He was there in the lake at the backlot of Universal. They had a hell of a lot of shooting to

do that didn't involve him. He was just in a very few sequences. And, of course, Ricou had little to do, too—maybe on a par with Ben. They must have had more time, and their job must have been a lot easier than mine. When we got back to the studio, it was all night shooting and all business. I had that scene with Bob Hoy and Brett Halsey and threw Bob—he was on a wire—into a palm tree. I think he cracked his ribs. I know he really messed himself up. It was a bad scene.

SS: How well did you know Ricou Browning?

TH: Ricou had to come out to California. He was trying to promote something, so he contacted me and I had him come out. He stayed overnight at the house. Later on, he acted like he hardly knew me.

"Oh, yeah, I've met Tom!" (Laughs) He got in with Ivan Tors, who made *SEA HUNT*, but that was long after I knew Ivan Tors and long before Lloyd Bridges got the lead in that series. I used to go with Ivan Tors' sister-in-law. I'm the one who told Ivan Tors about the *SEA HUNT* book, which the author wanted to develop into a TV series. He wanted to know if I'd be interested in working on it when he got it set with the studio, but I was busy with other things, so I declined. But I told him about Ivan Tors. I'm the one that got them interested in *SEA HUNT* and got Ivan and Ricou together, and they sold it as a TV series. At that time, Ricou hadn't done a damn thing! *CREATURE FROM THE BLACK LAGOON* was the first thing he'd done. I can't believe how many years it's been since that movie was made!

SS: Almost 50 years ago. Any thoughts on the proposed remake?

TH: Those things usually fail, but something like the Creature—a costume thing, those do well. You never know.

Tom Hennessey's website—revengeofthecreature.com—is under construction.



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ART ADAMS

Continued from page 73
they didn't want to pay us what they thought was fair, and they already had the rights to *MIGHTY JOE YOUNG*, so they just went with that one. There have been discussions about a cartoon version, and whether that will ever happen, who can know?"

When he was initially approached for *Creature*, Adams says it was his plan to do his own sequel. ("I didn't have a story, then; I just thought how cool it would be to do a sequel.") However, Dark Horse insisted on first adapting the original movie. Adams was aided by friend and fellow artist Steve Monk, who produced a script of the film—line by agonizing line and scene by agonizing scene when a copy of the screenplay was nowhere to be found—but the artist nevertheless found the project arduous at times. "I wasn't able to watch the movie for another five or six years after doing the comic, because as I was working on it I was watching the film for a minute or two each day, over and over and over. Pretty rough!"

Adams' fascination with the darker, more fantastic side of fiction became evident to the San Francisco native at the earliest of ages. "My mom thought maybe they should take me to a psychiatrist; I was apparently using the black crayon a lot more than she thought I should. 'Maybe he's not happy?' Ah, well—I was the first kid. I have four younger brothers and none of them were as into monsters as me. But I was the oldest, so I looked at them as the weird kids!"

Born in 1963 and weaned on late-night viewings of *FRANKENSTEIN* (1931),

KING KONG (1933), *BRIDE OF FRANKENSTEIN* (1935), Ray Harryhausen's effects-laden *20 MILLION MILES TO EARTH* (1957), various Hammer Horrors, and Godzilla movies, Adams' interests naturally reflected themselves in his art—and in his schoolwork. "I once did a book report in the third or fourth grade on an issue of *Werewolf by Night*. I convinced the teacher that it was really a book. That's not a comic book, is it, Arthur?" No, ma'am. It's a book. I just didn't bring it, I forgot it—but I wrote my report!"

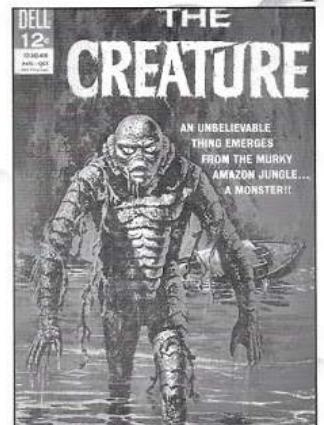
Never before given a full-fledged adaptation of his first starring film, the Gill Man had previously appeared in muddled comic form in the 1962 Charlton Comics' *Mysteries of Unexplored Worlds*, a 1963 Dell Comic titled *The Creature* (pictured on this page), issue #79 of *Archie's Pal Jughead*, and an Archie Series' *Laugh* #130 from 1962. Adams' adaptation remains the definitive version, but the artist finds at least one earlier incarnation to be not without interest.

"That Dell comic is just the weirdest thing!" says Adams. "There are several Creatures and they kill them toward the end and put them in some big barrel to take back to civilization. Then the viewer is led to look under the boat, where the Creatures have laid eggs—and there's these jelly eggs with Creature tadpoles. It's the weirdest thing!"

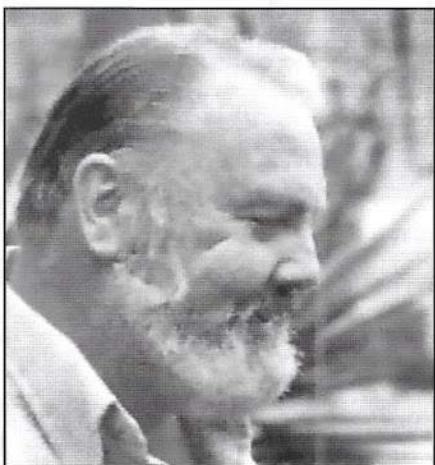
The lasting appeal of the Creature is attributable to many factors, claims Adams, who remains skeptical of any remake plans. "It's just one of those things. The original *CREATURE FROM THE BLACK LAGOON*—and really just the original; none of the sequels had it—

had a lot of heart. It also had a sense of wonder, and it was just cool! It was one of the greatest rubber-suit monsters ever."

I don't have high hopes for a remake. It's one of those stories that's better if it's set a little earlier in time. It's like, if they're going to remake *KING KONG*, it really has to be set in the twenties or thirties. It doesn't work in another setting. I'm personally not that unhappy that a remake hasn't been made. I don't have high hopes for it. I'd be curious to see it—but I think the closest we're going to get to a modern *Creature* film is *ANACONDA*!"



SCARLET STREET 77



Tom Hennessy

"Yeah, okay; well, we've got to get going"—and he didn't even say good to meet you or anything else and drove off. I never saw Natalie again.

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TH: You won't believe it, but I didn't even see that movie 'til this year. It was the same thing with a lot of my pictures. I'd never go to the theater to see them. I'd see the rushes if I was invited by the director or assistant, but that would be it.

SS: *Wasn't there trouble with the scene in which the Creature revives in the tank?*

TH: When I revived, I attacked Bromfield, and later I killed him. Anyway, we did the segment where I was running amok and they're trying to get that rope net on me. The guys were all local and a couple of them were big, heavy guys—and they were trying to drown my ass! It was incredible! I mean, they were serious—this was a real goddamn Creature and if he got loose he was going to kill everybody! So I thought, "The hell with this! These guys are getting unacceptable here." I took one guy—the biggest guy—and got hold of him by the thigh and his upper arm, was able to get him up in the air, and I slammed him into the side of the tank. Boy, he was disabled! Then I smashed the shit out of a couple of other guys. You know, when you're working with guys who aren't experienced or trained, they don't know what to do. That's where

people get hurt. Those incidents got the filming off to a bad start.

SS: *Any other incidents?*

TH: That first day going into the tank was an unsettling thing. There were big damn sharks in there, and sawfish and the turtles—those huge turtles! They tried to eat that goddamn suit because they fed 'em cabbages, so they had to have guys with poles to try and ward them off. I was in the tank a few times, like when I escaped and so forth. I did a foolish thing, but I was intrigued. They'd just brought in a couple of tiger sharks. One of them was easily twice as long as I was! I was friendly with one of the photographers with the local union, and I talked this guy into taking pictures of me through the window of the tank without the suit on. I went down into that tank, not knowing what was going to happen, and these sharks were swimming around and around. I knew the turtles were something to worry about, too. Well, this goddamn big tiger shark—with another one right beside him—came right up beside me! The guy got some really good pictures of that.

SS: *Even though you didn't land the role of the Gill Man in THE CREATURE WALKS AMONG US, you managed to make an appearance of sorts.*

TH: I was told that they were having trouble coming up with the proper sound for the Creature's roar—they tried lions and gorillas and all kinds of stuff—and that they used my voice throughout REVENGE OF THE CREATURE and THE CREATURE WALKS AMONG US as well. I never checked into it, but it makes me mad as hell! I should have gotten residuals off of that!

SS: *Were you approached about playing the Gill Man in the third film?*

TH: There was some talk about it, but I'd alienated myself by making comments about Jack Arnold. Jack was a party guy. He was a skinny, homely little guy, but he was the big shot with all the pretty girls around—especially in that scene in the restaurant. By the time they got the suit off me and I got to the restaurant, Jack Arnold was having a big party with all these people. That was right after I'd almost been killed filming that scene on the buoy, and Jack was having a party! One of the grips was goddamn near going to strangle Jack Arnold! He said, "You should be ashamed doing what you're doing when you almost caused a guy to die!" They wrapped and we didn't shoot again in Jacksonville. They went back to the studio and finished everything there.

SS: *Ben Chapman and Ricou Browning both had some amusing tales about their stints in the Creature suits. Did you have any opportunity to play any pranks?*

TH: Hell, no! I didn't have any time to be thinking about pranks. Ben Chapman didn't have that much to do and it was easy for him. He was there in the lake at the backlot of Universal. They had a hell of a lot of shooting to

do that didn't involve him. He was just in a very few sequences. And, of course, Ricou had little to do, too—maybe on a par with Ben. They must have had more time, and their job must have been a lot easier than mine. When we got back to the studio, it was all night shooting and all business. I had that scene with Bob Hoy and Brett Halsey and threw Bob—he was on a wire—into a palm tree. I think he cracked his ribs. I know he really messed himself up. It was a bad scene.

SS: *How well did you know Ricou Browning?*

TH: Ricou had to come out to California. He was trying to promote something, so he contacted me and I had him come out. He stayed overnight at the house. Later on, he acted like he hardly knew me. "Oh, yeah, I've met Tom!" (Laughs) He got in with Ivan Tors, who made SEA HUNT, but that was long after I knew Ivan Tors and long before Lloyd Bridges got the lead in that series. I used to go with Ivan Tors' sister-in-law. I'm the one who told Ivan Tors about the SEA HUNT book, which the author wanted to develop into a TV series. He wanted to know if I'd be interested in working on it when he got it set with the studio, but I was busy with other things, so I declined. But I told him about Ivan Tors. I'm the one that got them interested in SEA HUNT and got Ivan and Ricou together, and they sold it as a TV series. At that time, Ricou hadn't done a damn thing! CREATURE FROM THE BLACK LAGOON was the first thing he'd done. I can't believe how many years it's been since that movie was made!

SS: *Almost 50 years ago. Any thoughts on the proposed remake?*

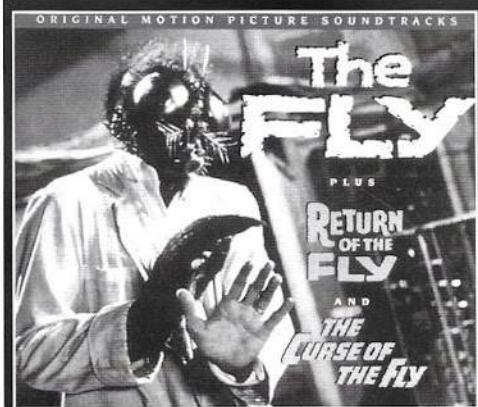
TH: Those things usually fail, but something like the Creature—a costume thing, those do well. You never know.

Tom Hennessy's website—revengeofthecreature.com—is under construction.

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ART ADAMS

Continued from page 73

they didn't want to pay us what they thought was fair, and they already had the rights to MIGHTY JOE YOUNG, so they just went with that one. There have been discussions about a cartoon version, but whether that will ever happen, who can know?"

When he was initially approached for *Creature*, Adams says it was his plan to do his own sequel. ("I didn't have a story, then; I just thought how cool it would be to do a sequel.") However, Dark Horse insisted on first adapting the original movie. Adams was aided by friend and fellow artist Steve Monk, who produced a script of the film—line by agonizing line and scene by agonizing scene when a copy of the screenplay was nowhere to be found—but the artist nevertheless found the project arduous at times. "I wasn't able to watch the movie for another five or six years after doing the comic, because as I was working on it I was watching the film for a minute or two each day, over and over and over. Pretty rough!"

Adams' fascination with the darker, more fantastic side of fiction became evident to the San Francisco native at the earliest of ages. "My mom thought maybe they should take me to a psychiatrist; I was apparently using the black crayon a lot more than she thought I should. 'Maybe he's not happy?' Ah, well—I was the first kid. I have four younger brothers and none of them were as into monsters as me. But I was the oldest, so I looked at them as the weird kids!"

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KING KONG (1933), BRIDE OF FRANKENSTEIN (1935), Ray Harryhausen's effects-laden 20 MILLION MILES TO EARTH (1957), various Hammer Horrors, and Godzilla movies, Adams' interests naturally reflected themselves in his art—and in his schoolwork. "I once did a book report in the third or fourth grade on an issue of *Werewolf by Night*. I convinced the teacher that it really was a book. 'That's not a comic book, is it, Arthur?' 'No, ma'am. It's a book.' I just didn't bring it, I forgot it—but I wrote my report."

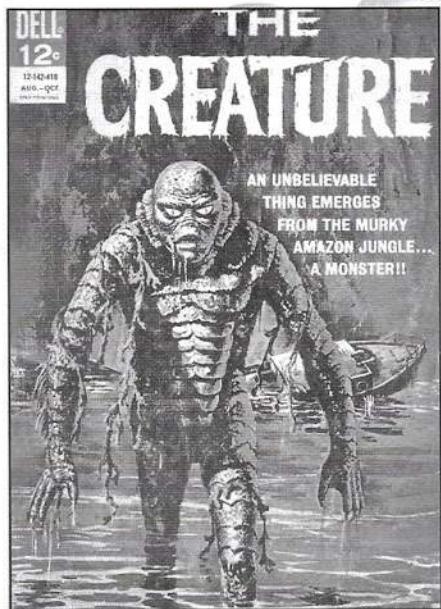
Never before given a full-fledged adaptation of his first starring film, the Gill Man had previously appeared in muddled comic form in the 1962 Charlton Comics' *Mysteries of Unexplored Worlds*, a 1963 Dell Comic titled *The Creature* (pictured on this page), issue #79 of *Archie's Pal Jughead*, and an Archie Series' *Laugh* #130 from 1962. Adams' adaptation remains the definitive version, but the artist finds at least one earlier incarnation to be not without interest.

"That Dell comic is just the weirdest thing!" says Adams. "There are several Creatures and they kill them toward the end and put them in some big barrel to take back to civilization. Then the viewer is led to look under the boat, where the Creatures have laid eggs—and there's these jelly eggs with Creature tadpoles. It's the *weirdest* thing!"

The lasting appeal of the Creature is attributable to many factors, claims Adams, who remains skeptical of any remake plans. "It's just one of those things. The original CREATURE FROM THE BLACK LAGOON—and really just the original; none of the sequels had it—

had a lot of heart. It also had a sense of wonder, and it was just cool! It was one of the greatest rubber-suit monsters ever!"

"I don't have high hopes for a remake. It's one of those stories that's better if it's set a little earlier in time. It's like, if they're going to remake KING KONG, it really has to be set in the twenties or thirties. It doesn't work in another setting. I'm personally not that unhappy that a remake hasn't been made. I don't have high hopes for it. I'd be curious to see it—but I think the closest we're going to get to a modern Creature film is ANACONDA!"



DAVID HEDISON

Continued from page 39

to Z, screaming, "Help me! Help me!"—but as a man. Well, what they did was speed it up. They sped up the dialogue so it became "Help me!" in that high-pitched voice. It shouldn't have been like that; it's ridiculous. It should have been the man's voice in a very tiny sound. That was really stupid. I was very upset when I saw it. I just couldn't even face people after I saw the film.

SS: *THE FLY* has a very fifties take on housewives and husbands.

DH: I was really pissed off with the way they made Patricia Owens look. She had to run around looking for the fly and she's frantic. She almost catches it and it gets out through the screen, and she's going crazy. Well, at the end of every take, makeup and wardrobe would come running in and fix her hair and clothes. I kept saying, "What are you doing? What are you doing; pull her hair down! We know she's beautiful, but she's looking for this fly and she's in a manic state; she should be bruised; her head should have hit the window!" Her whole face should have been bruised. Her hair should've been down, but no! If it had been more realistic in that way, *THE FLY* could have been so much better. I guess it's a cult film today, but it could really have been a classic.

SS: When you're caught in the spider web, it barely looks like you.

DH: They made my hair white, and then they said they didn't like seeing my red tongue. (Laughs) "Don't show your tongue. Curl your mouth over so we don't see your teeth." I thought that was so ridiculous; why shouldn't they see my teeth? All that nonsense! But I'm thought, "Well, they know what they're doing. These guys have been in the film business for 20 years, and I just arrived! Christ, I should have known!" (Laughs)

SS: For all its flaws, though, you still liked the original premise?

DH: Oh, yeah. I really bought it, that whole thing with the atoms breaking down and coming together in another room. I really believed that there could be the end of hunger in the world, that you could transport all this food and whatnot, break down the atoms and send it over. I really believe that! To me, it made sense, so having a realistic premise made acting so much easier.

SS: Did any of your ideas actually make it into the film?

DH: That whole business of scribbling on the blackboard to tell my wife that I love her—that wasn't a direction, but I figured that was the way he would have done it. I think the director just wanted me to write "help me" or "kill the fly." But this guy is going through a struggle; this fly is taking over his brain. He wants to be killed. People ask, "Did you do all that stuff in the mask when you break everything in the lab?" Of course I did! You think a stunt man could have done that? Do you think a stunt man could move like that and do the things that I did? No way! They would have

been so precise and so perfect that it would have been phony.

SS: How long did it take to put on the mask?

DH: It took me maybe an hour and a half, and then between takes I'd just sit there and wait. I was very patient that way. It gave me a chance to prepare and get ready for the next scene. I wasn't into having coffee and talking with the crew, because I was really doing a lot of preparation in my mind, considering the character's situation. I've lost my wife, my child—what can I do? Patricia—a very sweet girl, I loved her—she'd come up to me and say, "Can I get you something? Is there anything you want?" And I'd said, "No, just leave me alone right now."

SS: You were unable to speak or use facial expressions. How difficult was it to get across the character's emotions?

DH: Not difficult for me at all! Just believing it in my head; I just went through all kinds of hysteria in my body. Somehow the body language came out. I watched it myself when it was on AMC and I thought, "Well, that's not bad." (Laughs) I felt good; I felt thrilled by it; but then when she pulled the cloth off, I said, "Oh, shit! Oh, what it could have been!" And then at the very end in the spider web—it could have been such a gloriously horrific, painful scene. And it wasn't.

SS: The scene in which the press crushes you looks like it was very dangerous to film.

DH: That was the machine shop at the studio. That was a real press, and they had it come down to a certain point so it didn't crush me completely. I wasn't afraid at all. I couldn't give a shit, as long as the scene worked!

SS: No reservations about, "Mr. Hedison, would you kindly put your head and arm under the press?"

DH: No, it didn't bother me. They tested it and I could see it stopped at a certain point. I even said, "You can make it a little lower, because there's too much space over my head." They dropped it another inch, just to make it real.

SS: What about the film's director, Kurt Neumann? Tragically, he lost his wife a week before *THE FLY* premiered. Neumann himself died six weeks later, a possible suicide.

DH: Oh, it was a terrible thing. *THE FLY* would have been a very big thing for him, but I guess he was too depressed. He looked under the sink and there was a vodka bottle down there, but in the vodka bottle was some sort of acid, some cleaning fluid. He just drank it. It was either suicide or he didn't know what he was drinking, but he was feeling very low.

SS: How was he during the filming?

DH: He was fine. I don't know; I was so used to working with theater people and theater directors who'd like to dig deeper into the character. With him, as long as he got the shot and he got it done quickly—that's what mattered. We never had a discussion about what would happen; he left me alone. There was one day when I arrived on the set and they'd just finished filming something, I asked, "What were you shooting?" They said,

"An unimportant scene, David. It's when your hand turns the knob; it's just a hand insert." I said, "Hand insert? Whose hand was it?" They said, "Well, Kurt did it. He just put his hand in and turned the knob." And I said, "No! That's not my hand! He has a fat hand!" (Laughs) "I don't have a fat hand!" He and I had a bit of a tiff and he wouldn't reshoot it. He said, "You won't know the difference." Well, when I watch the film and see that thing, that fat hand turning the knob, I get sick. So there we are! What are you going to do? No control. That's why the theater is so wonderful, because nobody can mess with you. You're up there and nobody can say "Cut!" and "You can't do that," because if you're interesting, the audience will look at you.

SS: What can you tell us about your onscreen wife, Patricia Owens?

DH: The first time I met her was at the home of James Clavell, who wrote the screenplay. He and his wife, April, and Kurt Neumann and his wife invited us for drinks before the film started. It was a lovely evening and we were all going to have a good time making the film. The first scene I played with Patricia was in the garden, just before I turn into the fly when I do the experiment. The studio was very nervous, because they thought I was too young for the part of the scientist. They were afraid of that. They grayed my hair, which God knows they don't have to do any more. (Laughs) That was the very first day; I remember that distinctly. And the reason I remember it is because, when the dailies came out the next day, I sensed a sigh of relief from everyone, that the scene worked. I knew the scene worked, because I felt very good in the scene; I felt very good with Patricia. The love scene, I thought, worked very well. It was really a wonderful scene, but just before I left to go to London to do *THE SON OF ROBIN HOOD*—that minor "classic"—they called me in to loop some dialogue, because there were some birds in the background. I looped it in a rush, because I had a plane to catch that afternoon. They kept telling me to lower my voice. And I'd lower it, but I kept thinking, "Why am I doing this? This is not a human sound." I just wanted to do it and get out of there, catch the plane and go to London—and the scene is now dead. That garden scene was brilliant when we did it. It was warm; it was close. What you see, now—well, I almost want to do it again and redub it. That's not a human voice! It's a dubbed sound; it's hollow and unfortunate. When Patricia saw the picture, she said "Whose voice is that? That's not David! What is that sound?"

SS: *THE FLY* premiered while you were still in London.

DH: And when I came back from London, it was a huge hit. It opened in 400 theaters simultaneously, and the *Motion Picture Herald* had an ad in big print saying "*THE FLY* is opened!" and underneath it said, "400 theaters never saw anything so big!" (Laughs) Now, I think that's very funny! But they pulled it, because they thought it was too shocking.

SS: Did you get to know Vincent Price?

DH: I talked to him a few times, but I was always very serious and very intense and wanted to make the picture really good. And so we didn't have too much to do with each other. We had no scenes together, so I really didn't get a chance to know him. I only got to know him when I did *VOYAGE TO THE BOTTOM OF THE SEA* and he was a guest star. He said, "David, I've never seen you like this. I always thought you were so intense and earnest." Earnest was the word, but on *VOYAGE* I was always kidding him and making jokes, all kinds of stuff. And he just couldn't believe the change in my personality. (Laughs)

SS: Vincent Price often didn't take the films that he was making very seriously.

DH: Absolutely! He made a lot of fun of it; he thought it was a ridiculous thing. Poor Herbert Marshall and Vincent had to look at that spider and the fly in the web and they were always breaking up laughing.

SS: Price's daughter, Victoria, discussed her father's bisexuality in a biography she wrote.

DH: Well, I always knew Vincent had sort of this light touch. No one ever said to me, "You know, he's gay" or—what did we say in those days?—queer. No one ever said anything to me, but there were a lot of people who were gay and no one ever said much about it. Looking back, how horrible it must have been for someone who was homosexual and had to live in a society that was predominately heterosexual. What pain they must have gone through in their lives, being pushed into loveless marriages and ruining women's lives. The horrors that went on during that period! How much healthier it is today, with the young people saying, "Oh, yeah, I'm gay. No, really, yes, and this is my partner." It's so healthy because it's good and that's the way it should be—but back then it was very much kept under wraps.

SS: Strip *THE FLY* of its sci-fi elements and you almost have what was regarded then as a woman's film. It's about a wife who tries to keep a perfect home while her husband neglects her and follows his own pursuits.

DH: That's right! All of that, exactly! Doing his thing. Well, of course, he wasn't having drinks with the boys and fooling around womanizing on the side; he was doing very serious work. But that's exactly right.

SS: Why do you think *THE FLY* remains so famous even to this day?

DH: Well, first of all, the screenplay is better than the new version with Jeff Goldblum, even though I thought Jeff was terrific. The story wasn't as interesting; nothing held your interest in that film. You admired the different elements, like his ear falling off and all that stuff; you admired the way they did it, but it wasn't interesting. The original *FLY* is a better film because it stuck to the story. All the others that followed never did; they just did all kinds of gory stuff.

SS: So you think its fame is due to James Clavell's screenplay?

DH: Oh, I think it's due to all of us! It's due to James Clavell because he stuck to

the story, but I think it's got a lot to do with me, with Patricia, with the director, with all of us. We had something that we thought might be successful. I originally thought it was going to go right through the roof. I thought it was going to be major. It wasn't quite major. It was A minus, but it could have been an A plus.

Next: VOYAGE TO THE BOTTOM OF THE SEA

BRETT HALSEY

Continued from page 42

From my experience in B pictures, we'd have used that same hamburger over and over again! (Laughs) That's the difference between A and B pictures.

SS: How would you compare Jean Negulesco on *THE BEST OF EVERYTHING* to Douglas Sirk, who directed you in *ALL I DESIRE*?

BH: Oh, they were totally different. Sirk was a German in every sense of the word. Negulesco, I think, was Romanian, but he was more French. He was a romantic. At lunch, he would invite one of his leading ladies into his bungalow and "prepare lunch." He was a great cook and raconteur. His home was a pleasure palace. His wife was a great hostess—they were entertainers. He enjoyed his work. I don't want to say we'd have fun, but it was a light experience. Sirk was more serious. Not to say that Negulesco was so unserious that he wasn't successful, because he certainly was—very successful—but he did it with a light touch.

SS: One of your costars was Joan Crawford.

BH: I don't have any positive things to say about her. She was obviously a very unhappy woman—I don't know why. The thing that I remember most is that she demanded the air conditioning be set so cold that everyone else on the set was freezing to death. You'd never hear a kind word about her. I didn't have any scenes directly with her, but I'd go and watch. I think most of what was written about her was accurate, based on my limited experience. She didn't enjoy life at all! I'd like to hear the stories about some of the men who were married to her. How the hell did they live with her?

SS: 1959 also saw your participation in another B film—*THE ATOMIC SUBMARINE*, directed by serial king Spencer Gordon Bennet.

BH: Again, he was such an old pro that you didn't feel pushed. He was just that efficient in his thinking. He did a lot of editing in his mind. He wouldn't waste shots. A lot of directors will shoot a lot of coverage, just to be safe, to give a lot to the editors to work with, but Bennet wouldn't do that. He'd shoot what was needed, and that was one of the ways that he could shoot fast. On *ATOMIC SUBMARINE*, even though we shot the principle photography in only five days, you wouldn't notice it—and there were a lot of special effects for that day.

SS: Did you get to know him as an individual?

BH: No. Some people you get personally involved with and others you don't. I don't recall having two words with him

off the set—not for any negative reason. We were there to do a job, we did our job, and then went home. That isn't to say it wasn't a good experience; it just wasn't personal. Actually, I've learned more about him in later years, reading histories of film, than I ever did working with him. He knew what I could do, and I knew what it was like to work with him. It was just like a well-oiled piece of machinery. We did our jobs.

SS: Arthur Franz had one of the lead roles in *ATOMIC SUBMARINE*.

BH: Arthur Franz was kind of a cold person. I had the impression that he—as opposed to the others, who seemed to be happy to be working—that he thought doing this was a comedown, that he should have been a bigger star or doing more important pictures. He wasn't very approachable. He was okay, but he just seemed kind of sour, where the other guys were all "up" kind of people.

SS: Was one of the "up" people Dick Foran?

BH: Dick Foran was a big star when I was a kid. To be working with Dick Foran and Bob Steele—another big cowboy star in the serials—I was so thrilled and impressed to be working with these stars. I was humbled to be playing in a picture where they weren't the big stars.

SS: Did you ever mention to Foran that you'd been a big fan of his work?

BH: Oh, I'm sure we talked about it; yes. I mean, how could you not? But I didn't want to get into the thing where it sounded like I was saying, "Hey, you used to be such a big movie star. Why are you doing these B pictures?" I didn't want to get close to that. Obviously, he was doing it because he needed the job—why else would anybody do it? Or maybe he just wanted to work; I don't know. But it was a pleasure to work with him.

SS: What can you tell us about another co-star—Joi Lansing?

BH: I knew Joi—not well—from her marriage to a friend of mine, Lance Fuller. Joi wasn't my type of girl; she was, to me, more artificial than I like. I like more natural beauties. I don't think I ever saw her without full makeup—which is nothing against her, just my personal taste. I don't think I worked with her at all in the picture.

SS: Did she have a star mentality?

BH: Well, rather than star mentality, I think I'd call it starlet mentality—you know, always on display, ready for the next break. It sounds negative, and I don't mean it to be negative. It was a condition that existed among many of the girls—and the guys, too.

SS: How did you avoid taking this attitude?

BH: I didn't mean anything negative by mentioning Joi's starlet attitude. It's just that she followed the starlet trail, taking advantage of whatever publicity opportunities that came along for her. I didn't know her very well, but I knew she worked very hard at getting ahead. I was luckier than many like Joi. I worked at my acting, but success with my career came rather easily.

Next: TWICE TOLD TALES



Ann Rutherford briefly returned to films in the 1972 murder mystery **THEY ONLY KILL THEIR MASTERS**, appearing with Tom Ewell, James Garner, Katharine Ross, and (not pictured) fellow MGM graduates Peter Lawford and June Allyson.

ANN RUTHERFORD

Continued from page 62

thing to do with music, with performing, something like that. And he certainly would not grow up and marry his childhood sweetheart! Not when they'd split up so many times."

SS: *It was out of character.*

AR: He'd had all these other women in his life. And besides, I wasn't about to give myself curvature of the spine bending over to kiss him. So, no, to everything a season, and it had had its time in the sun. Mickey Rooney did the one film in the fifties, with some of the other original cast members; I think Mickey wheeled up anybody who was still alive. I didn't even go see it.

SS: *You did return to MGM for a film in the seventies, though.*

AR: Yes, I did, but just for a friend, a dear friend of mine—Bill Belasco, who produced it. He wanted me to be his good luck charm. It was at MGM, and it was called **THEY ONLY KILL THEIR MASTERS**. It was sad going back. The whole thing turned my stomach, what had happened to MGM in the ensuing years. There was no makeup department, no hairdressing department, no wardrobe department—it was awful. I asked, "Where do I go about makeup?" and they said, "Well, there's a makeup man on the set." I said, "You mean at one of those tables with the lights, like the dress extras use?" They said, "Yeah." I said, "I just sit out there in this big, black room with those lights blinding me? How about my hair?" "Well, they do it all with irons now." I said, "Not on me, they don't!" I told them I'd arrive made up and with my hair done, which I did. I was so saddened. They didn't even have Mr. Mayer's mother's matzo ball soup in the commissary.

SS: *Well, that's just wrong!*

AR: Well, it's just flat out wrong! I found it so depressing; I just couldn't believe

that I was on the same lot. The idiots could have turned MGM into a tourist attraction, like they did at Universal. They had everything there from the Great Wall of China to Esther Williams' diving pool. They had the train station where Greta Garbo coughed her life out. All they had to do was get some little tour busses. Instead, they sold it, and it's all tacky-tacky little houses, now. They didn't have a grain of sense among them! Then they had that terrible auction, where they auctioned off all the props. I'd been on sets where they'd have nothing but pure antiques, glorious pieces. They had incredible treasures there that were picked up for beans when they were filling their prop department. That's what got me started on collecting antiques, really.

SS: *The MGM prop department?*

AR: Oh, yes. For **PRIDE AND PREJUDICE**, we were on a set that had been designed for Norma Shearer when she was going to play Greer Garson's role. She had chosen to wear Empire clothes, so the room was done in the Empire style of decorating. The rooms were small, and the furniture was very fragile. Then, when Greer took over the role, she said, "There is no way I'm going to wear those wet nightgowns!" She had Adrian design these incredible clothes with not quite hoop skirts, but big, huge skirts and huge leg of mutton sleeves. Now, when they got the five daughters plus Mary Boland into the room with all that delicate furniture, why, nobody could move! I mean, just moving around required plotting in advance of need. (Laughs) We were sitting twirling spills, which is a piece of paper that you twirl until it's long like a straw. You twirl it and then lick it, then fold it under and you put it in a twirl vase for the man of the house. That's how he lighted his pipe; he'd take one of these long things and stick it in the fire and then light his pipe. Anyway, one of us got up and moved across

the room, and her skirt hit a table and knocked it over. On it was a lovely little porcelain piece, and it broke into two pieces. The prop man swept it up and it landed in the trash. Well, as soon as they called five, I dug it out and I marched it into our old dressing room. The next day I brought some Duco Cement and I glued it. I still have it, and I've been collecting porcelains ever since.

SS: *Well, at least you kept some treasures from being auctioned away.*

AR: I used to think that everybody was nuts when they were paying those prices for things. The ruby slippers now go for a couple of hundred thousand dollars. I have a friend who's a waitress in Pennsylvania, and she bought the black hat that Clark Gable wore in **GONE WITH THE WIND**, in the scene where he brings the gold wedding rings back. She bought it for \$2,000 and it took her about two years to pay it off, and I thought she was crazy. Then she resold it on eBay for something like \$15,000! (Laughs) I still have a little heart necklace that I wore in **GONE WITH THE WIND**. I've had more phone calls on that. I get letters from people wanting to buy that. I'm not selling it!

SS: *No! Hang on to that!*

AR: Oh, I will! So that's the story of my life, honey. I'm sorry I talked so much; ask me the time and I'll tell you how to make a clock!

SCREEN AND SCREEN

Continued from page 31

up as Bobby's shrewish wife and his divorced best friend, respectively) and spend so much time establishing the reasons for the leads' sexual and romantic dysfunction.

Turner and Laughlin are excellent, but Perkins steals the show with his sexo-religious rants and patented post-**PSYCHO** mugging. It's a bit unnerving to watch his fetishistic, scatological street preaching if you're at all aware of his real-life sexual torments, though it's fascinating to see this brilliant, troubled actor tap into his own personal demons and bring demented energy to what would be a throwaway part in anybody else's hands. The climax falls apart when Russell decides to reference **PSYCHO** (1960) a bit too literally, but overall the cast makes the weird subject matter work.

The Anchor Bay DVD utilizes a clean, uncut print and is presented in wide-screen, but this is a true no-frills disc. Unlike virtually every other Anchor Bay release, there are no extras—no director's commentary or trailers and the like. Perkins, of course, is long dead, and Turner refuses to discuss the film, which she apparently considers an early career mistake. That's too bad; though **CRIMES OF PASSION** is certainly a very sexual film, it is not just another semipornographic time waster. Russell and company make some very pointed comments about Americans and sexuality in the

Continued on page 82

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IT'S DELOVELY!

Continued from page 17

mitted on film, but none so egregious as to make Fred Astaire appear subject to the same natural laws as the rest of humankind.

The film looks splendid on DVD, and is accompanied by the featurette COLE PORTER IN HOLLYWOOD: SATIN AND SILK, hosted by the still lovely Cyd Charisse. Also included is the very first Cole Porter musical on film, an early Vitaphone production of his stage show FIFTY MILLION FRENCHMEN, here retitled PAREE, PARÉE and shorn of all but four songs. Running a brisk 20 minutes, the short features Bob Hope.

Paris is conquered by Gene Kelly and LES GIRLS (Warner Home Video, \$19.98), a 1957 concoction helmed by George Cukor. Kelly plays dancer Barry Nichols, storming Paris with three beauties from France (Taina Elg as Angele), England (Kay Kendall as Sybil), and the good ol' USA (Mitzi Gaynor as Joy). The story is an amusing take-off on RASHOMON (1950), in which an incident is recalled from several points of view. In this case, the incident is sparked by the publication of Sybil's memoirs, which engender a libel suit from Angele. What follows is charmingly presented and almost entirely stolen by the inspired comic antics of Kendall, who died of leukemia a mere two years later.

Elg sings the wistful "Ca C'est L'amour," which Porter stole from himself—it's a virtual replay of C'est Magnifique," written for CAN CAN. As with Astaire and "The Ritz Roll and Rock," Kelly's final number in LES GIRLS is in the rock vein. "Why Am I So Gone About that Girl?" hasn't dated well, with Kelly doing an ersatz mumblin' Marlon Brando impression. Stylishly directed in CinemaScope by Cukor, who uses his widescreen canvas as effectively here

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as he did with 1954's A STAR IS BORN, LES GIRLS is quite a tasty bonbon, though ultimately it's a lesser entry in both the Porter and the Metro catalogue, with only five of the 14 songs written for the film being used.

Again, the DVD presentation is the tops, as is the featurette COLE PORTER IN HOLLYWOOD: CA C'EST L'AMOUR, hosted by Taina Elg.

In 1940, Cukor directed THE PHILADELPHIA STORY, the MGM version of Philip Barry's Broadway comedy, but he skipped the 1956 musical version, HIGH SOCIETY, with a champagne bubbly score by Porter and effervescent performances by Bing Crosby (in the role played in the original by Cary Grant), Grace Kelly (in the Katharine Hepburn part), and Frank Sinatra (subbing for James Stewart). Lending sly support in this tale of a rich girl "goddess" brought down to earth are Celeste Holm, Louis Calhern, and—most memorably—Louis Armstrong, who gets the show off to a rhythmic start with "High Society Calypso" and teams with Crosby for the classic "Now You Has Jazz." (HIGH SOCIETY shifts the story from Philadelphia to Newport, Rhode Island, the better to incorporate the Newport Jazz Festival as an excuse for Satchmo's presence).

Crosby and Sinatra—the two most influential male singers of the 20th century—had teamed before on radio and at wartime fund-raisers, but HIGH SOCIETY marked the first time the two-some starred together onscreen, and they don't disappoint. (Ol' Blue Eyes is good, of course, but Der Bingle pockets the picture effortlessly.) Their duet of Porter's "Well, Did You Evah?" (originally written for Broadway's DUBARRY WAS A LADY, and dropped from the 1943 movie) is the picture's highlight, though the Oscar winner and pop favorite was the ballad "True Love," warbled warmly by Crosby and Kelly.

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Fred Astaire plies Peter Lorre, Joseph Buloff, and Jules Munshin with wine, women (including Barrie Chase), and song in SILK STOCKINGS (1957).

HIGH SOCIETY has received a digital transfer for its DVD debut and is presented for the first time in stereo. Extras include the featurette COLE PORTER IN HOLLYWOOD: TRUE LOVE, hosted by Celeste Holm, and newsreel footage of the film's premiere.

Those wishing an overview of the musical need look no further than THE GREAT AMERICAN SONGBOOK (Warner Home Video, \$19.98), a fascinating and informative 176-minute documentary hosted by Michael Feinstein. Crosby, Astaire, Sinatra, Gene Kelly, Judy Garland, Ginger Rogers, Al Jolson, Ethel Merman, Alice Faye, Ray Bolger, Sophie Tucker, Bessie Smith, Ethel Waters, Dinah Shore, Kate Smith—they're all here, socking across such timeless tunes as "Anything Goes," "Alexander's Ragtime Band," "Some of These Days," "The Last Time I Saw Paris," "Puttin' on the Ritz," "Once in Love With Amy," "Am I Blue," "Till the Clouds Roll By," and (needless to say) "God Bless America."

Warner Home Video and MGM Home Entertainment have transferred these films meticulously to DVD in superb editions, retaining all the glory of The Golden Age of Movie Musicals.

SCREEN AND SCREEN

Continued from page 80

Reagan era, especially regarding the ironic contrast between mere sexual gratification, which is easy to find, and true emotional intimacy, which is a bit trickier. Yes, CRIMES OF PASSION is an exploitation film, but it's one with something to say—a true cinematic rarity.

—Jonathan Malcolm Lampley

FAUST Kino Video \$24.95

Although Friedrich Wilhelm Murnau is best known for NOSFERATU (1922), FAUST (1926) may be the director's supreme achievement. With art directors Walter Röhrig and Robert Herlitz, Murnau constructed a mythical universe as impressive as the future world of Fritz Lang's METROPOLIS (1927).

FAUST opens with one of the silent screen's most iconic visions of evil: a titanic, horned, winged presence, casting its pestilential shadow over a medieval German village. The film's ultimate message of the power of love is encoded in the beams of celestial light that blind the Devil, amidst smoke and flame, in the opening sequence. Played by Emil Jannings, Mephisto manifests in three forms: first as the winged beast, then as an impish mendicant with luminous eyes, then as a fatuous dandy who guides Faust through a life of dissolute indulgence. Jannings' Expressionist acting style is perfectly suited to the first two incarnations, but proves grating in the third, comic characterization. Swedish actor Gösta Ekman (Faust) and Camilla Horn (as Faust's innocent love) provide a dramatic gravity that prevents the human element from being overpowered by Murnau's monumental imagery.

As in most Murnau films, FAUST is laced with gay in-jokes. (Murnau himself was gay.) Though the dandy Mephisto breaks the Gothic mood of the first act, his overplayed advances on Gretchen's repugnant Aunt Marthe provide Murnau with license to satirize bourgeois notions of heterosexual domestic bliss.

The richly shaded DVD transfer appears to have been struck from the 1996 David Shepherd restoration. While image quality is above average for a silent film, FAUST could benefit from an updated digital restoration. The projection speed is a little too fast, and the font chosen for the intertitles more closely resembles Celtic calligraphy than the original German black letter (which can be glimpsed in the opening credits). The still supplement includes many rare photographs. Silent movie specialist Timothy Brock graces the film with one of his most powerful orchestral scores, intensifying the tales' epic sweep and spectacle.

An apparent influence on Carl Dreyer's PASSION OF JOAN OF ARC (1928), FAUST stands as a timeless example of cinematic art, a rare synthesis of uncompromised personal vision and major studio production values.

—Michael Draine

I WANT TO LIVE! MGM Home Entertainment \$14.95

I WANT TO LIVE! (1958), a flavorful time capsule of another era when the vice squad prowled smoky downtown dives full of reefer-toking, finger-snapping, jazz-digging hipsters, also happens to be the most powerful indictment of capital punishment ever to come from Hollywood. Additionally, it provided the occasion for a richly-deserved Oscar for Susan Hayward. Hayward, 41, portrays Barbara Graham, the "titian-topped temptress" executed in 1955 for a crime she probably didn't commit. Not above passing the occasional bad check, Barbara was crucified by a prejudiced, sensationalistic press. ("I've seen angel pussies who'd shoot their grandmothers in the back and take bets on which way they'd fall," remarks one.) Barbara was



also a bisexual drug-user, but the film—in order to placate the censors, or promote audience sympathy for Graham, or both—omits these details.

As played by Hayward, Graham is the sort of tough-as-nails broad who curls her upper lip in the face of adversity and who, when someone makes the callow observation that life's a funny thing, retorts scornfully "Compared to what?" Though it's always difficult to completely separate such larger-than-life movie queens from the roles they play (Hayward's Brooklyn accent, like Barbara Stanwyck's, makes it especially hard), it may be said that Hayward's performance here is among the cinema's all-time greatest.

Robert Wise's profound sense of humanity won him his first directorial Oscar nomination. (He'd previously received a nod in 1942 for editing CITIZEN KANE.) Wise's work here stands alongside his very best: THE DAY THE EARTH STOOD STILL (1951), WEST SIDE STORY (1961), and THE SOUND OF MUSIC (1965). Johnny Mandel's deliciously jivey music (performed by Gerry Mulligan, among others) helps evoke the period, but like two other fantastic jazz scores of the same year, George Duning's BELL, BOOK AND CANDLE and Henry Mancini's TOUCH

OF EVIL, it failed to snag a nomination from the strictly-from-Squaresville Academy. (Even Bernard Herrmann's VERTIGO was shut out that year in favor of such efforts as the Disney nature documentary WHITE WILDERNESS!)

Preserving the film's original wide-screen format, the DVD presentation of I WANT TO LIVE! is not without its fair share of minor surface defects, but it still looks pretty good. The only extra is a scratchy, full-screen trailer. ("She was the wildest of the jazzed-up generation . . . she was driven by a thousand desires . . . a few of them decent.")

—Jon Anthony Carr

UNBREAKABLE Touchstone Pictures \$19.95

Between the successful THE SIXTH SENSE (1999) and SIGNS (2002), writer/director M. Night Shyamalan slipped us this very thought-provoking film. UNBREAKABLE (2000) gives us a unique view of what it might be like to be a superhero. The film did not enjoy great box-office success. It didn't fit into a nice package and wasn't easily marketed. It is not dressed up in flashy clothing or given to simple, quick solutions. And it is certainly not an action film. If your idea of great filmmaking is lots of explosions and carnage, pass UNBREAKABLE by, but if you're looking for something to challenge you, this is a must-have.

Bruce Willis stars as David Dunn, the sole survivor of a terrible train crash. He doesn't have a scratch on him and this draws the attention of a strange comic-book dealer named Elijah Price (brilliantly performed by Samuel L. Jackson). Price believes "... comic book heroes walk the earth." In sharp contrast to Dunn's seeming inability to be hurt, Price, who has been called "Mr. Glass" since childhood, suffers from "osteogenesis imperfecta," a disease that makes his bones brittle.

As these two men journey down a path of discovery, Shyamalan proves yet again that he's the master of a particularly cerebral style of filmmaking. Highly atmospheric, UNBREAKABLE appears to drag until viewers realize that we're following David Dunn's path of self-realization—which, as many of us can attest to, is often confusing, sluggish, and frightening.

Released as a two-DVD set, the discs are filled with many wonderful extras. These include additional scenes that were left out of the theatrical version (each introduced by Shyamalan) and behind-the-scenes footage. One sequence, "The Train Station," is given a multi-angle look. An excerpt from an early film made during Shyamalan's childhood years offers a glimpse into his future genius.

An exclusive feature, COMIC BOOKS AND SUPERHEROES, is a great treat for comic-book fans. It includes interviews with such luminaries as Frank Miller, Will Eisner, and Denny O'Neill, as well as Samuel L. Jackson, who professes to be a longtime comic reader.

—Edward Brock

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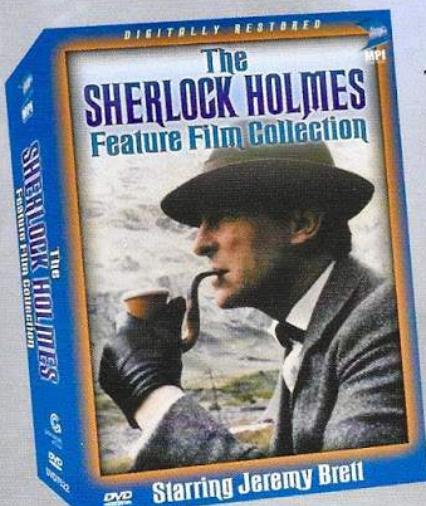
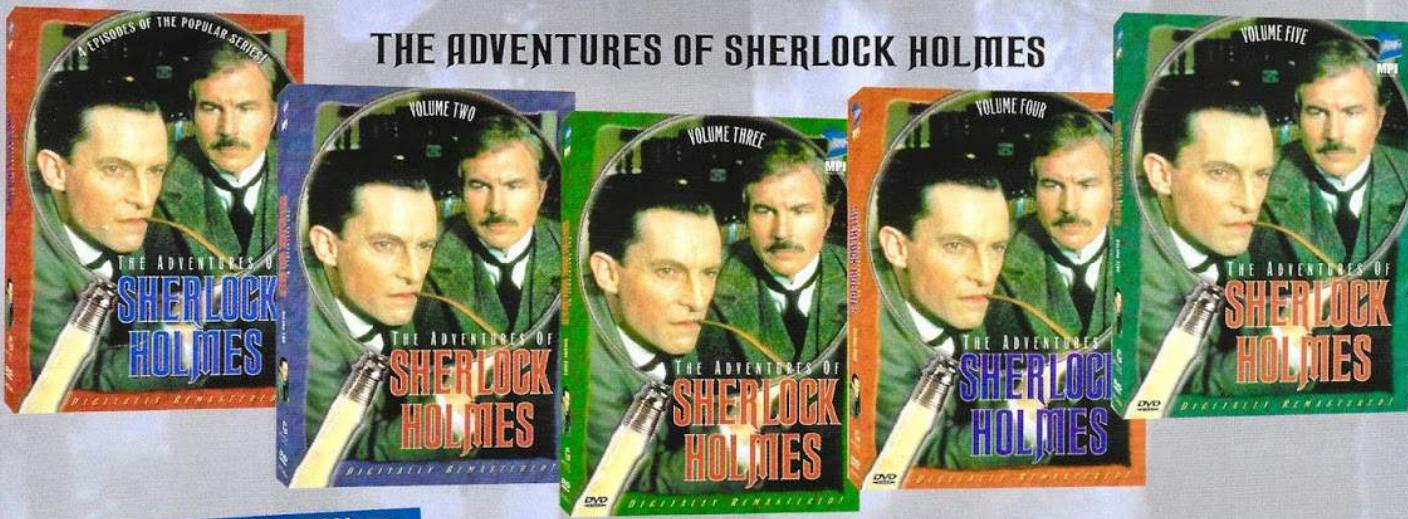
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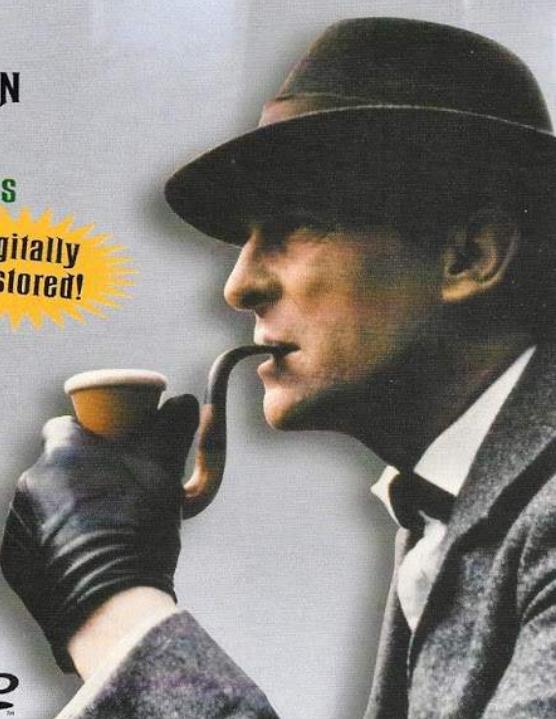


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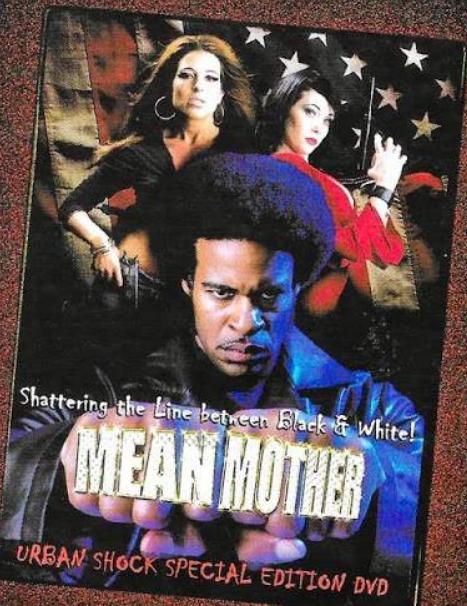


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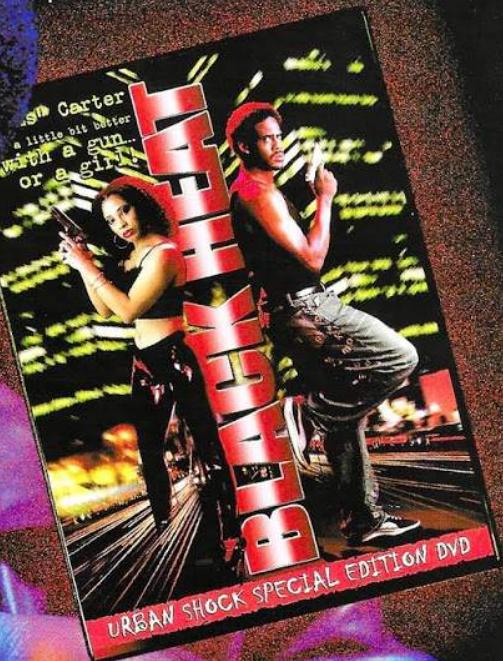
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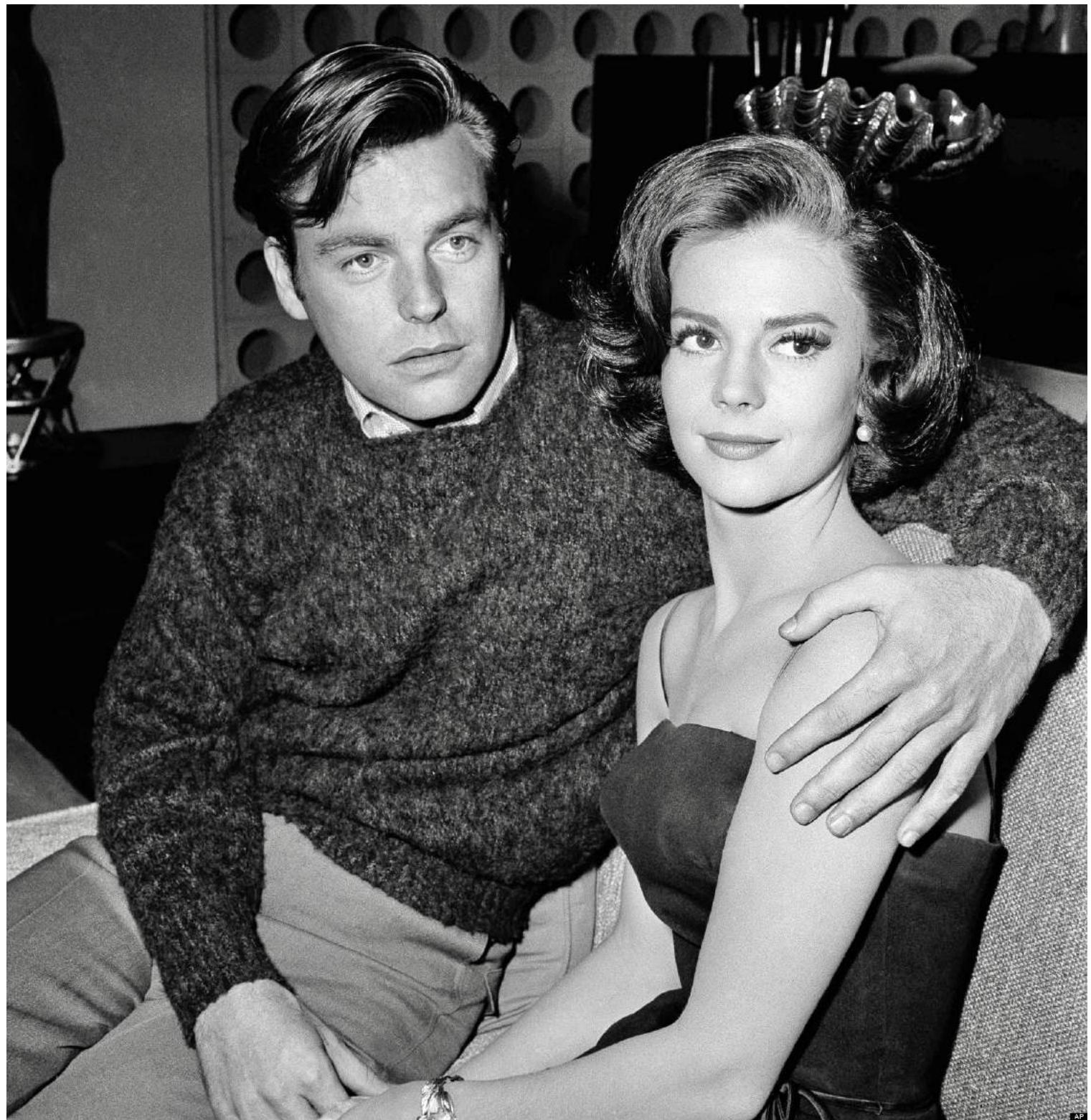






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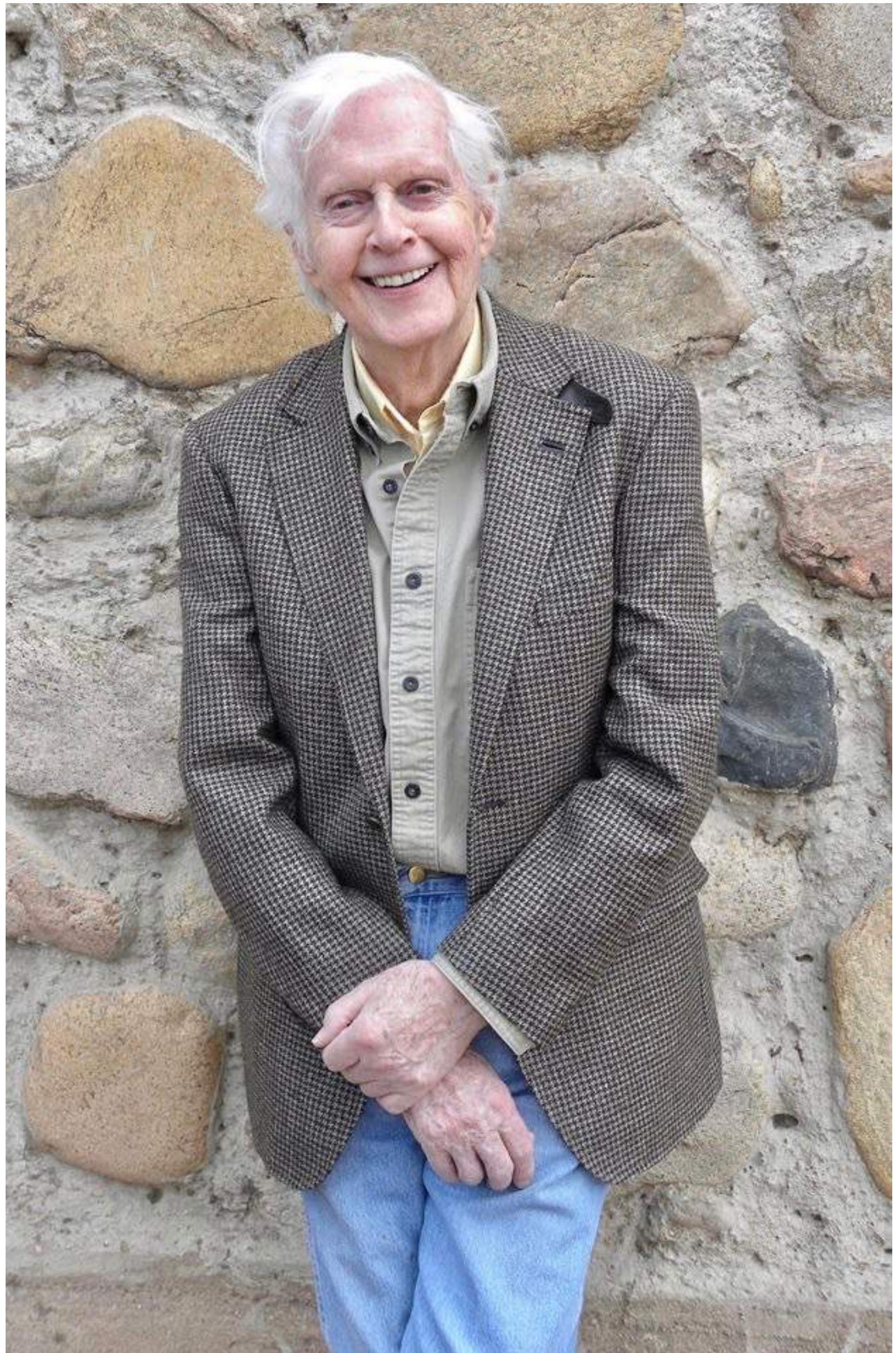


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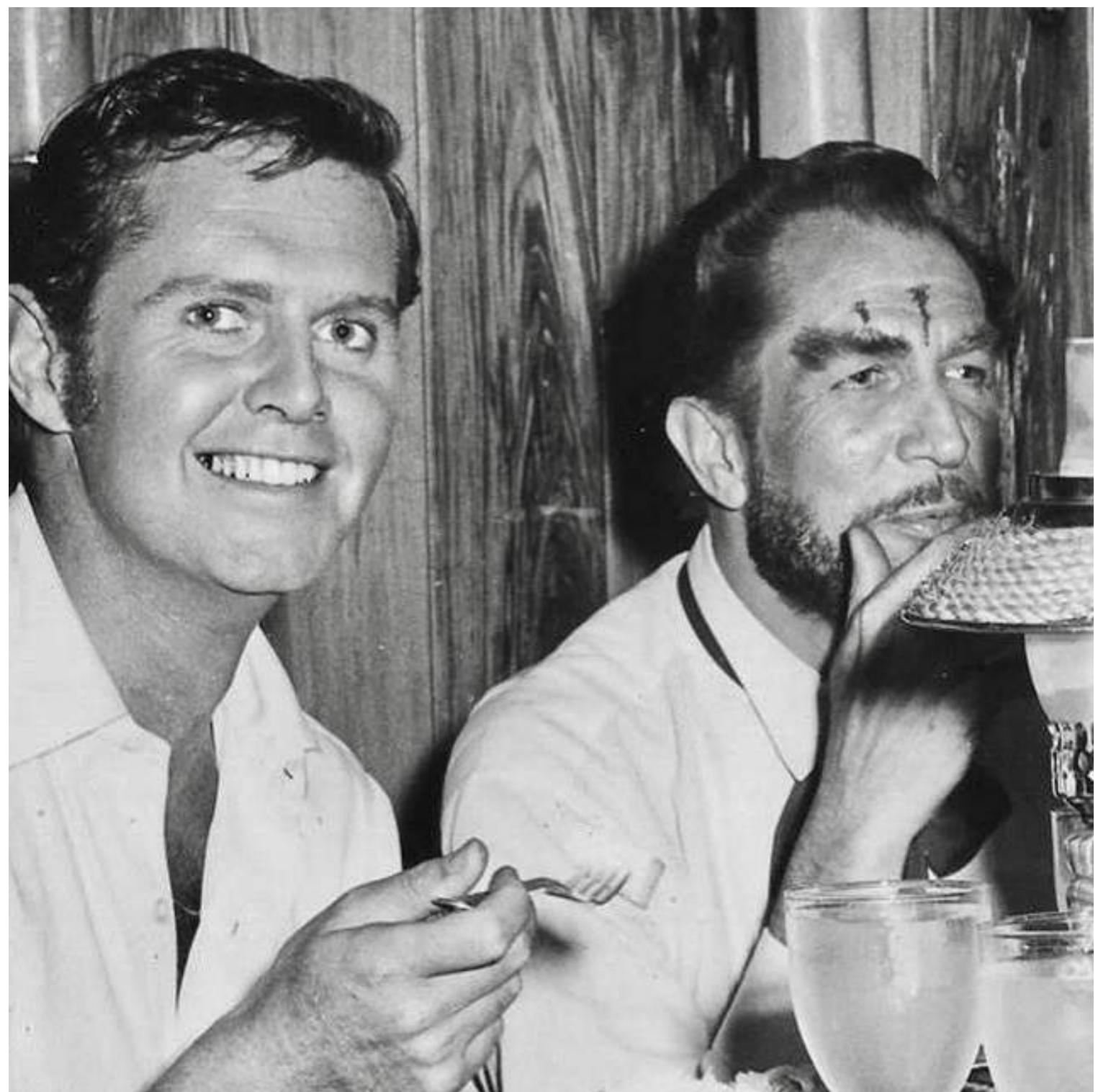


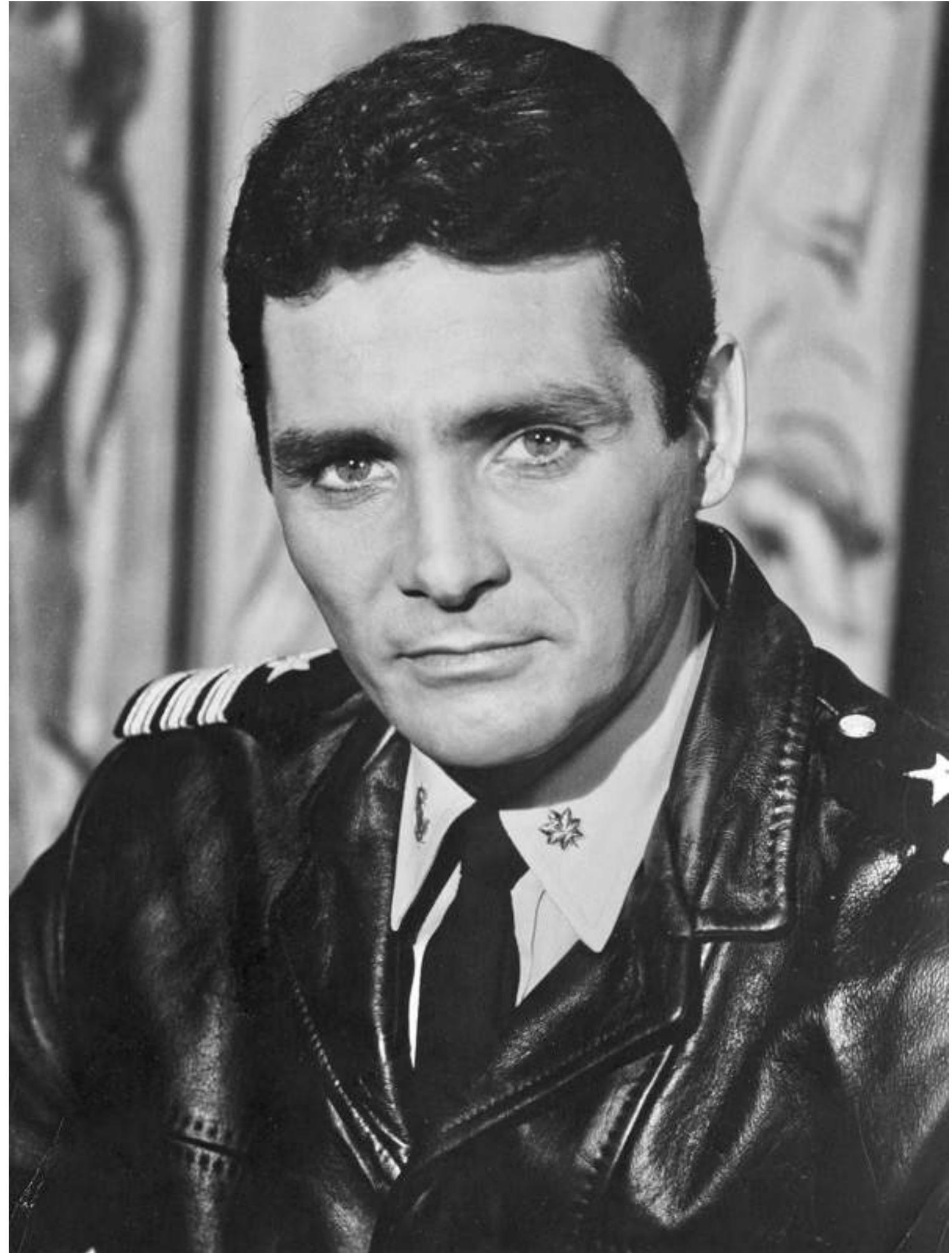
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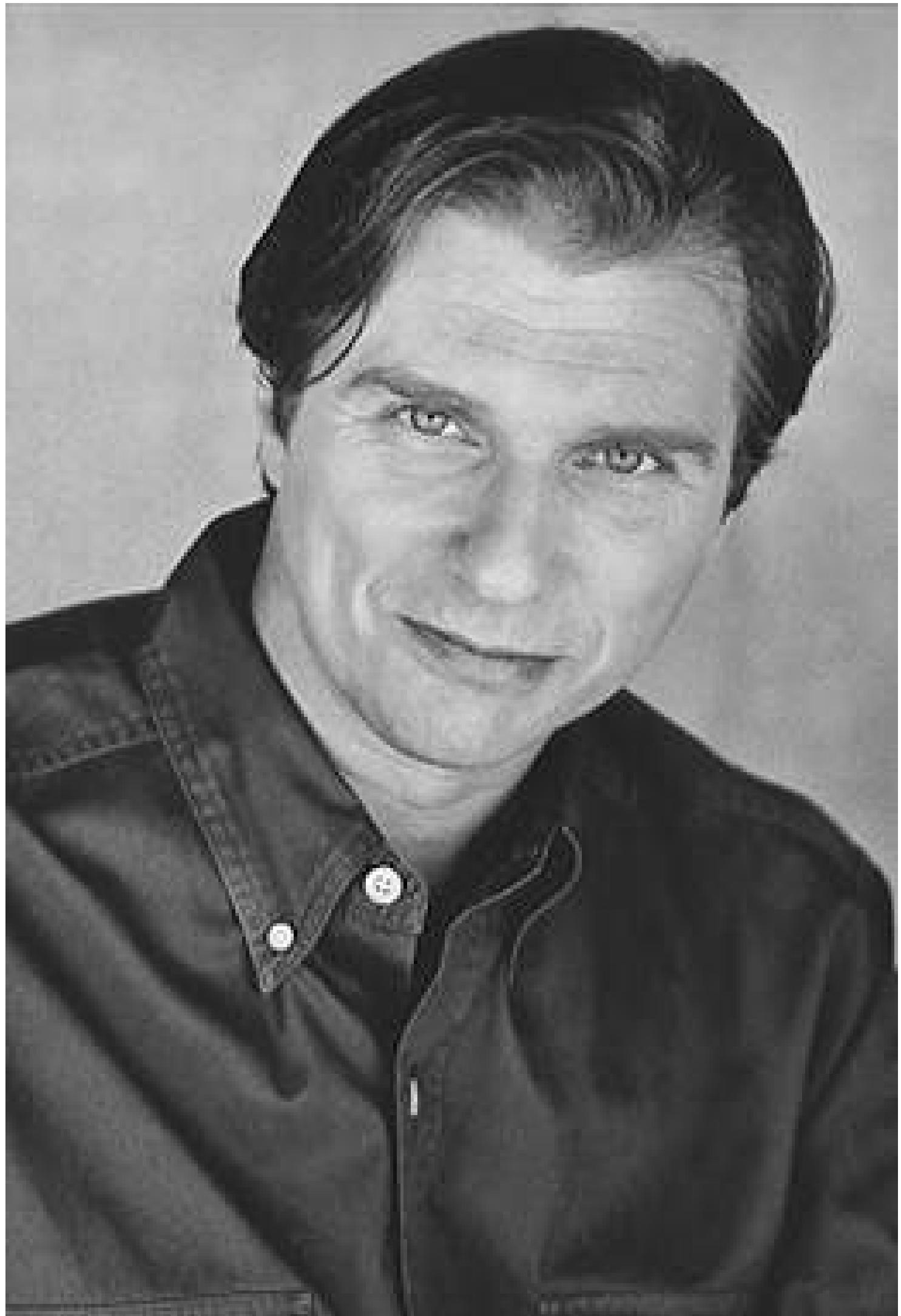


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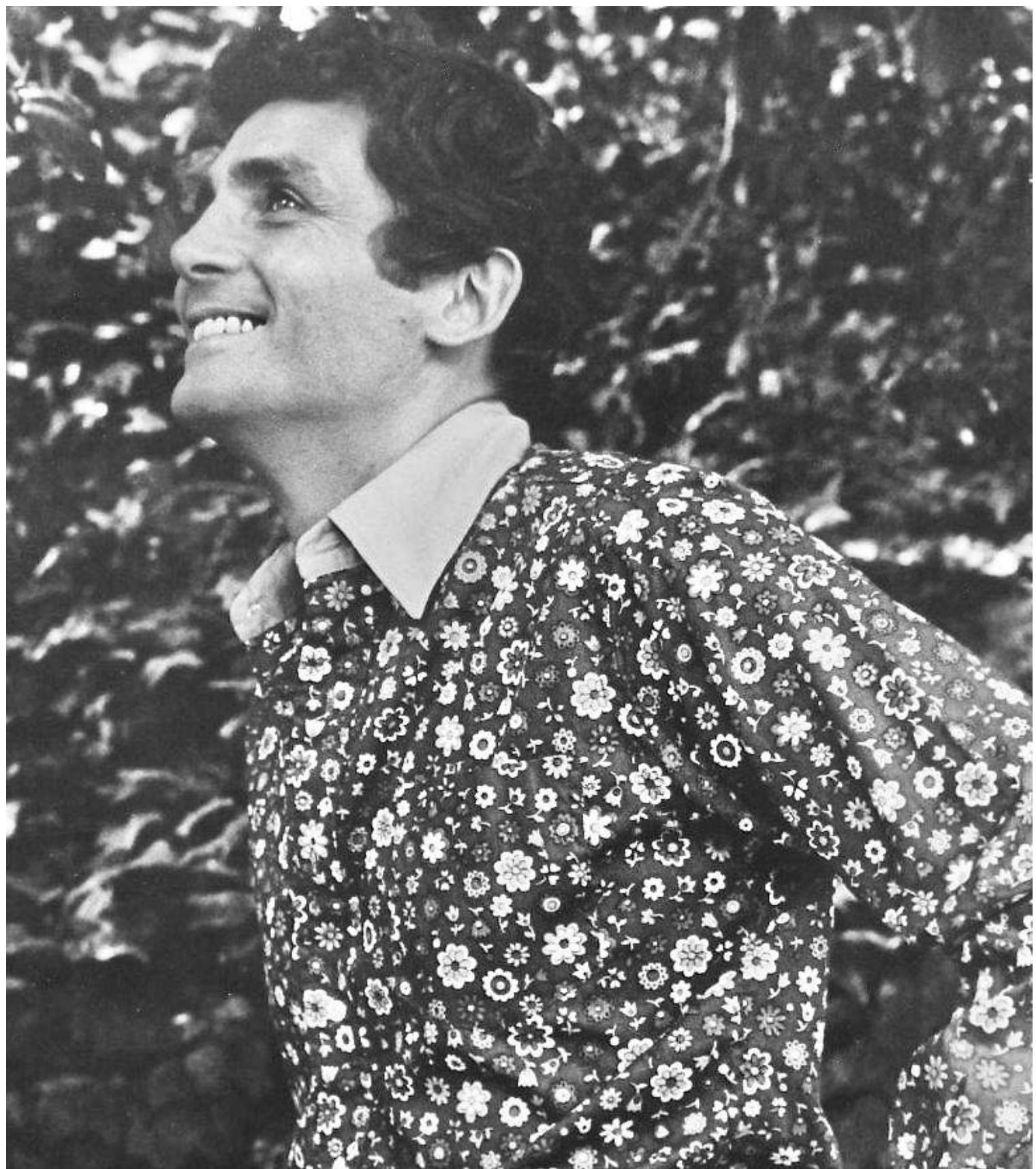




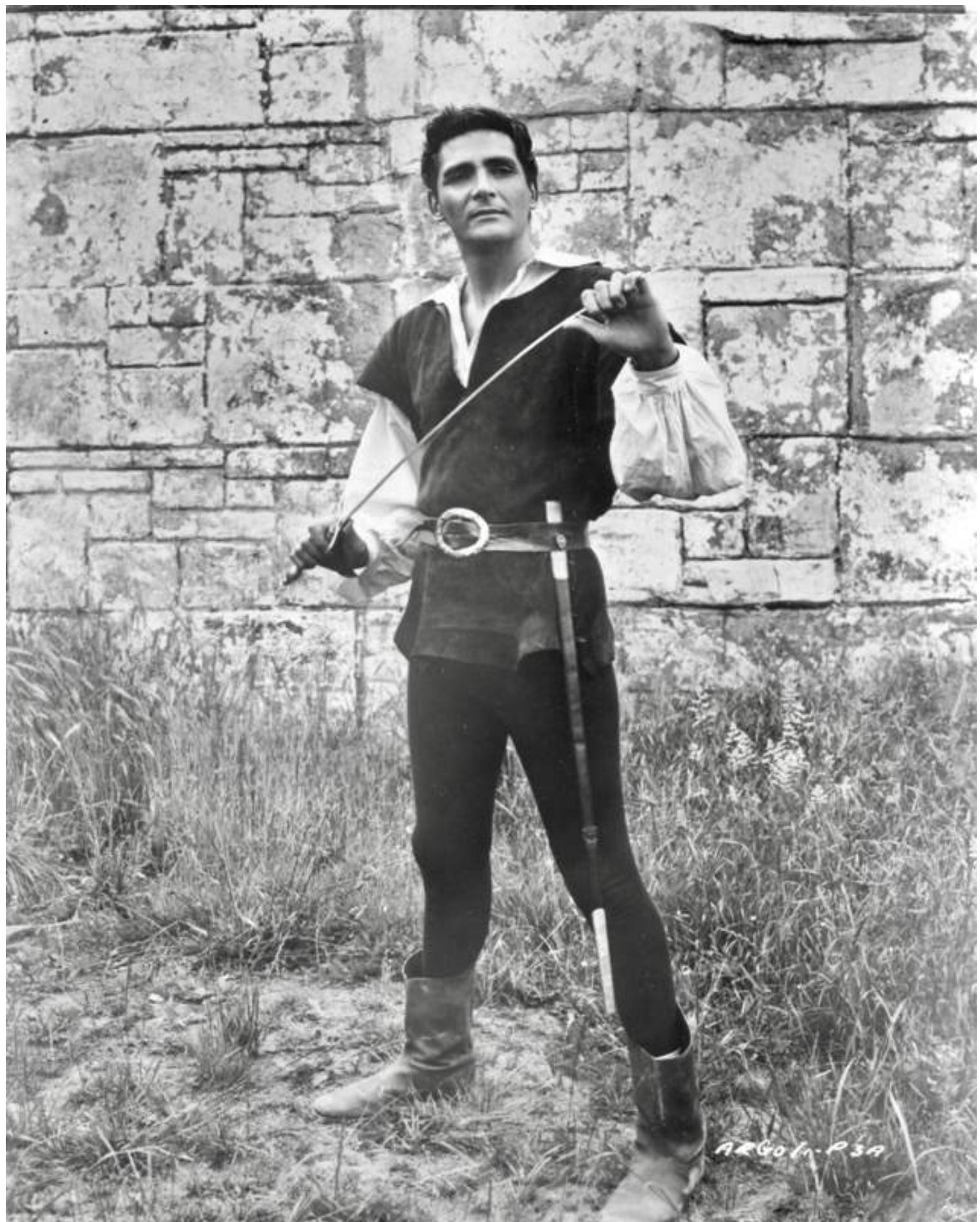












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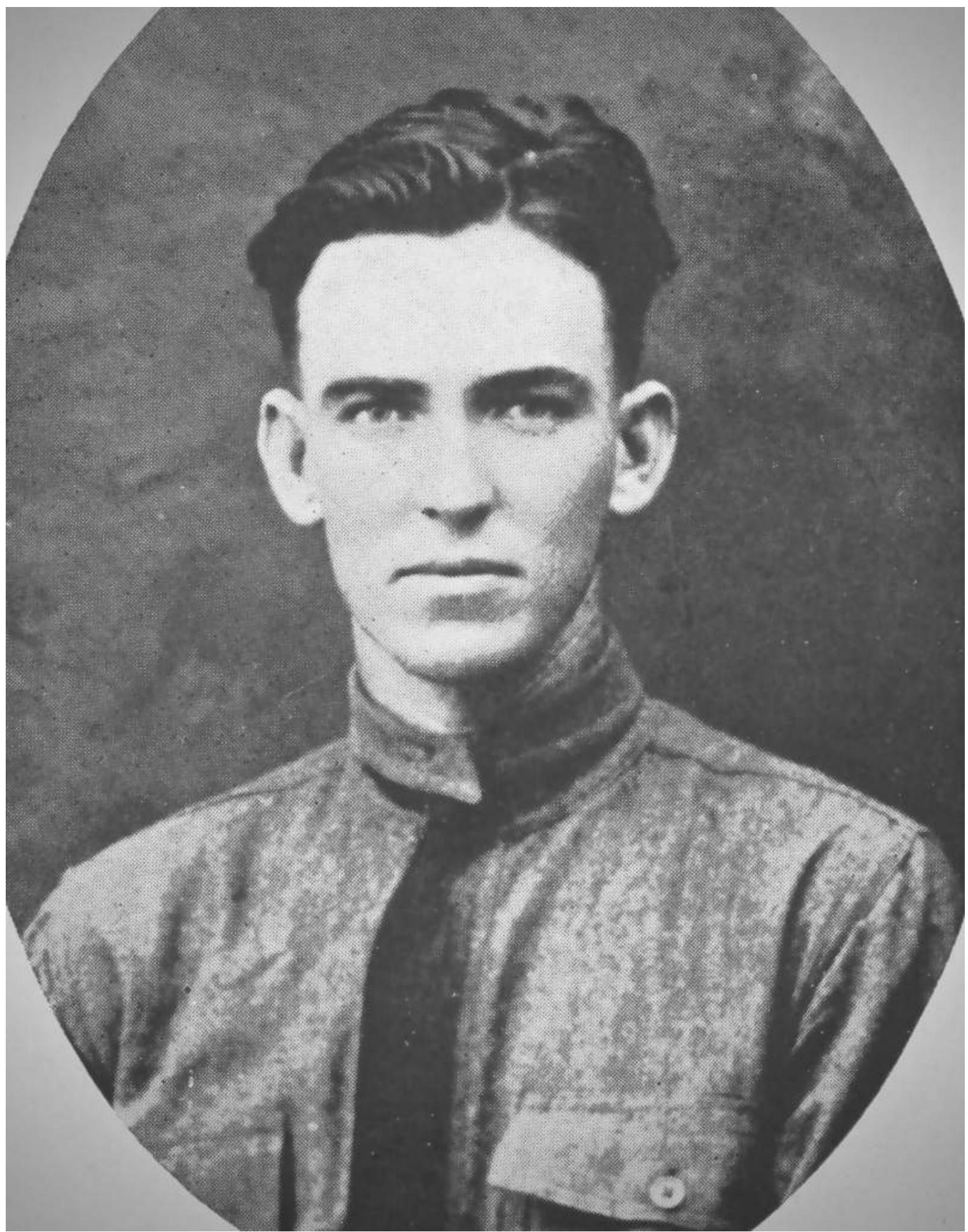


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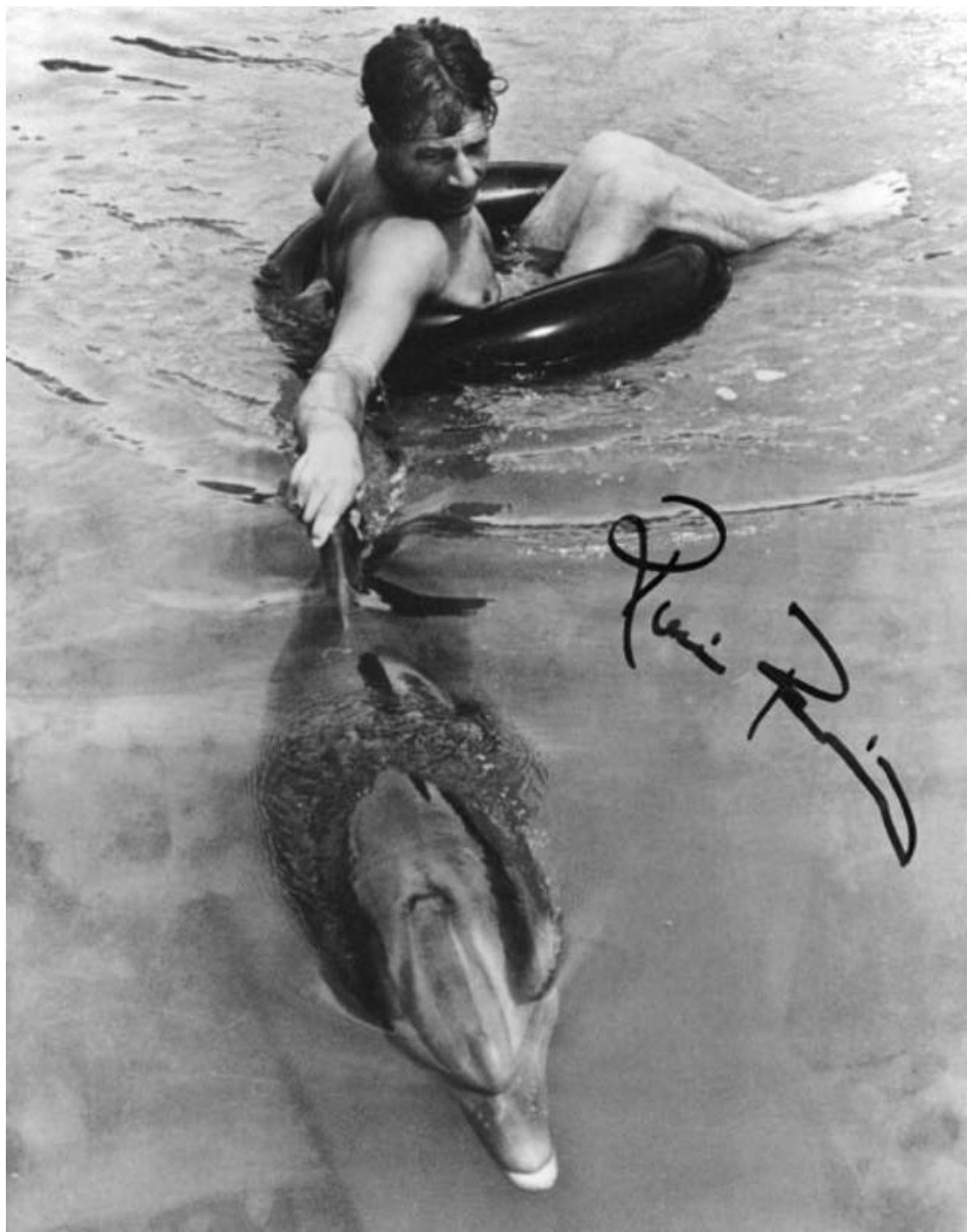
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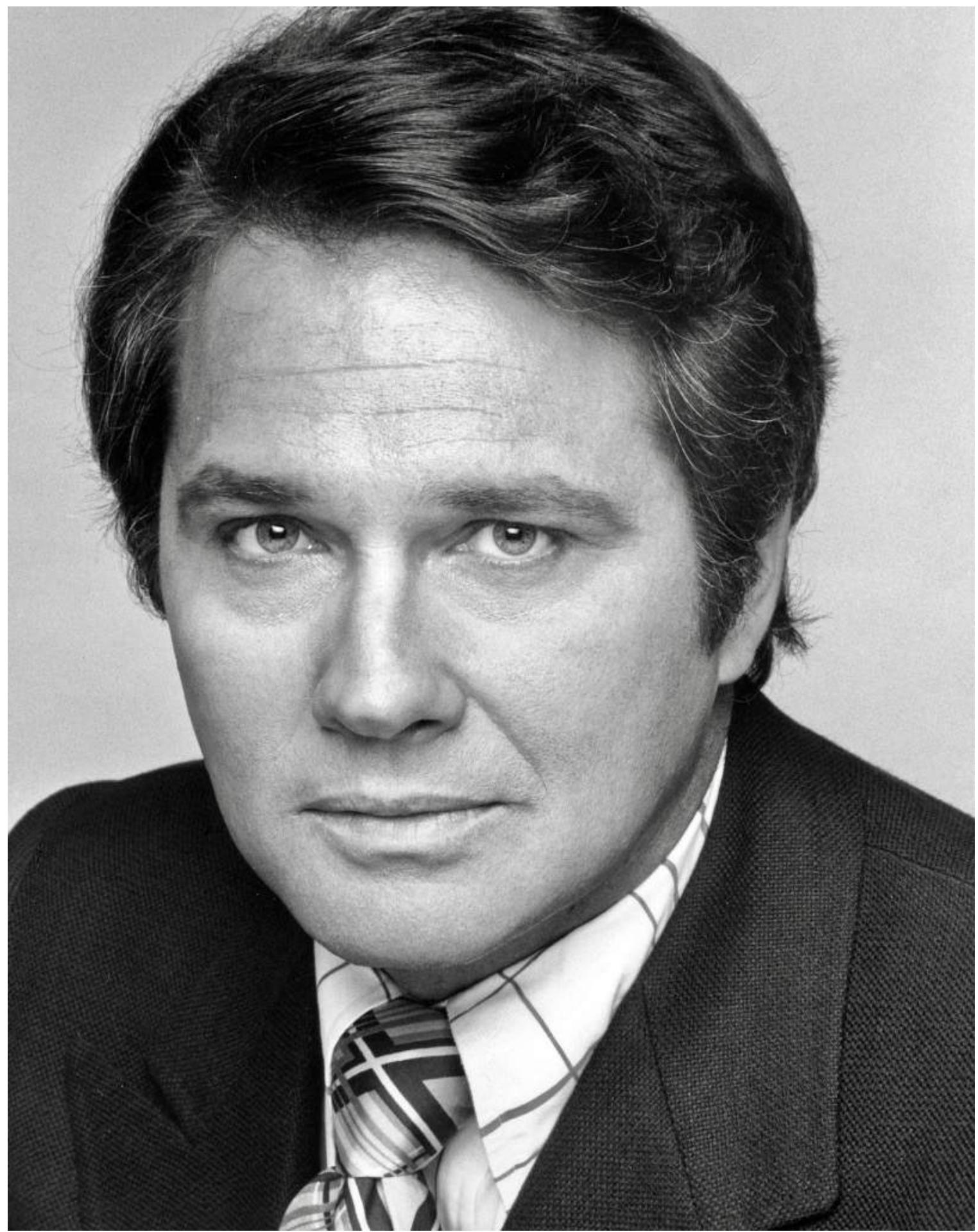


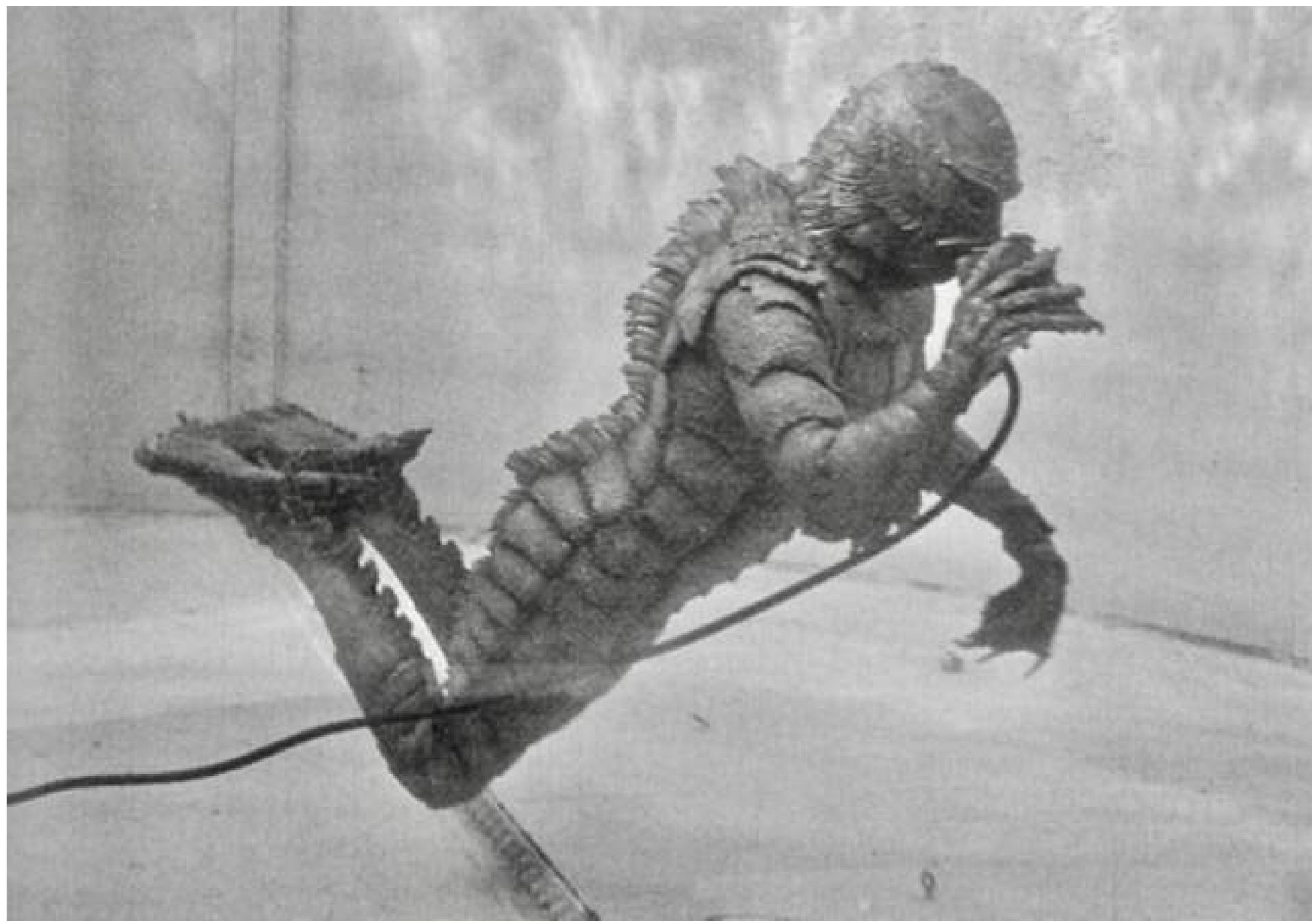




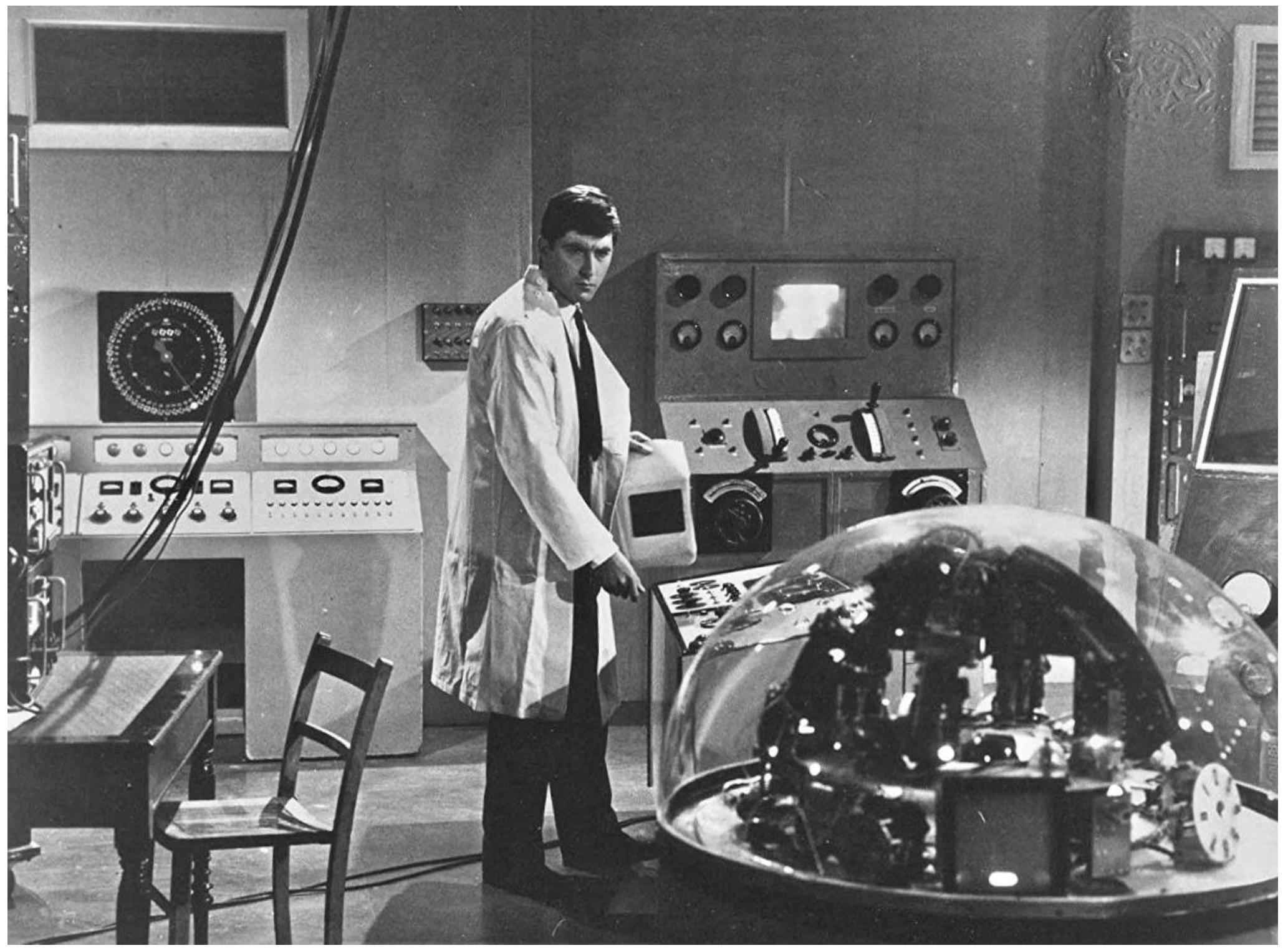


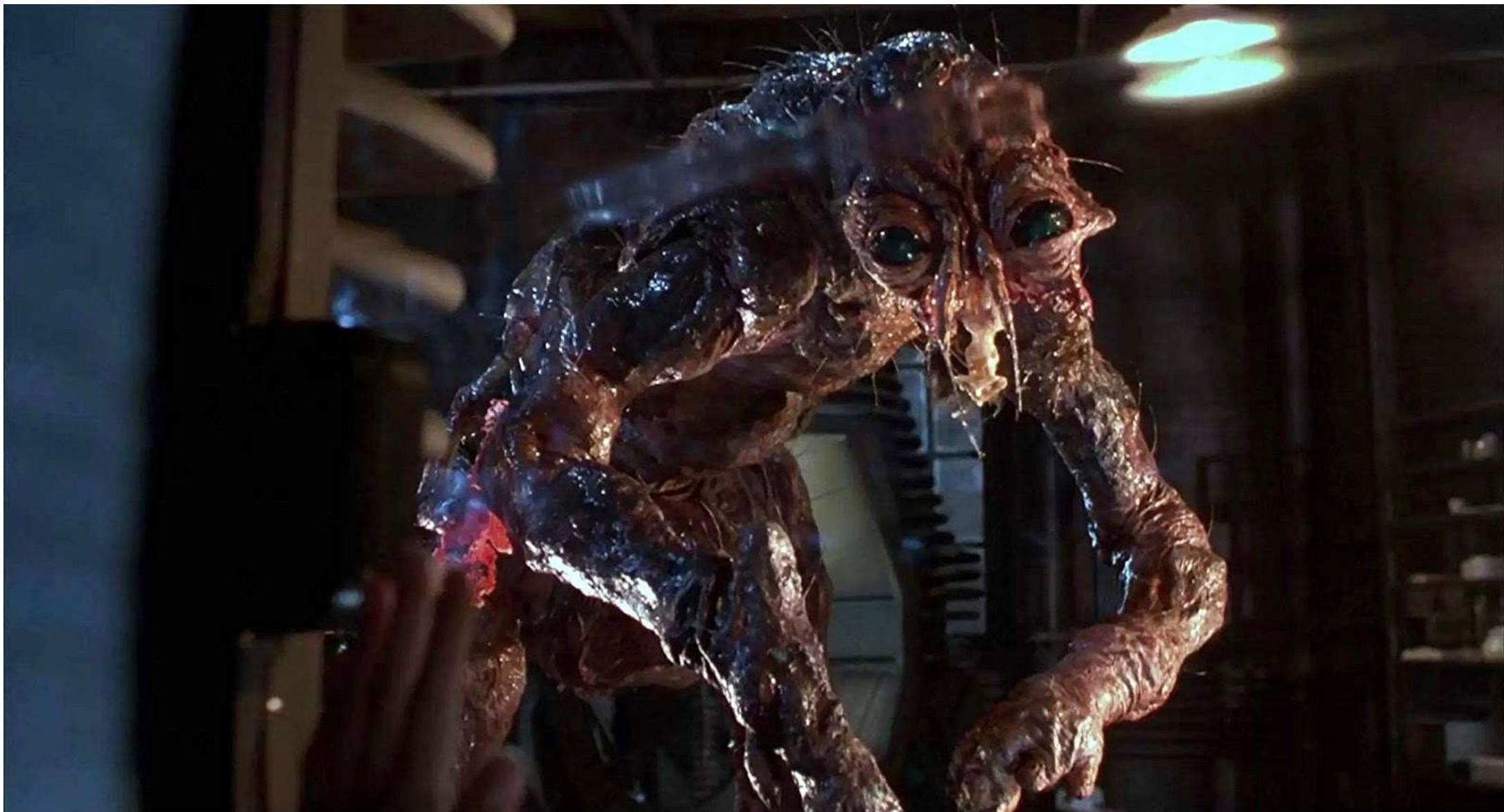














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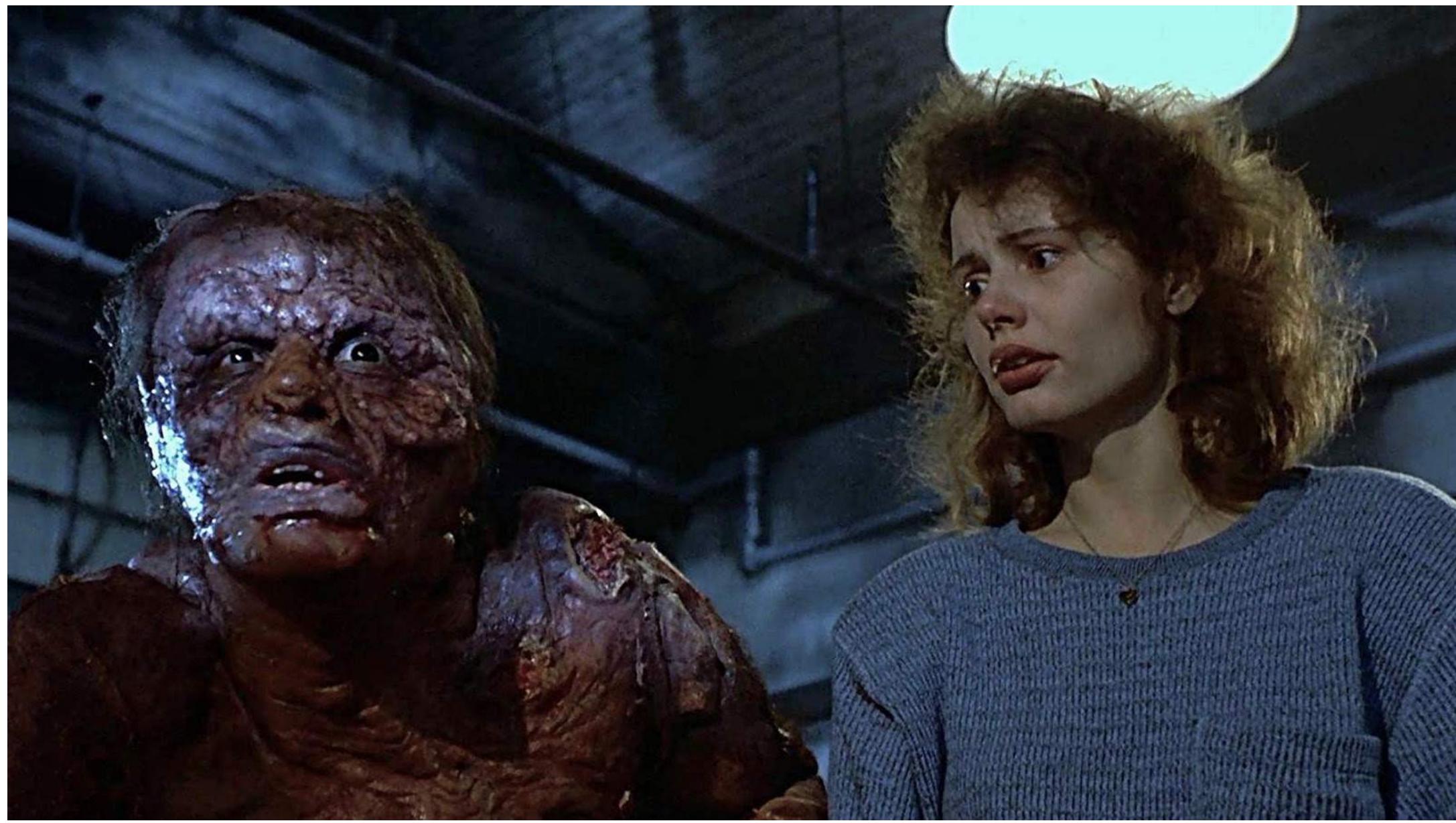
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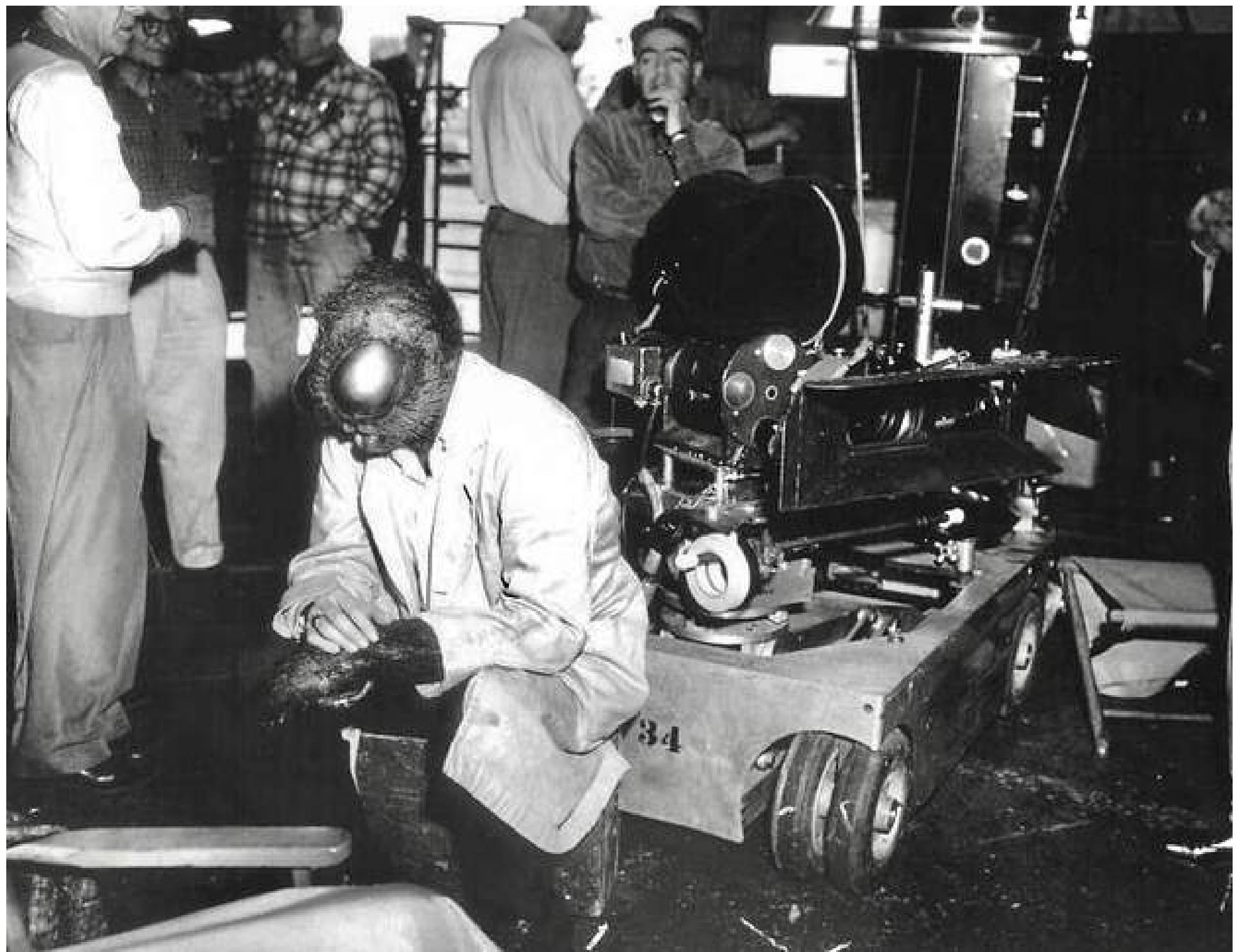
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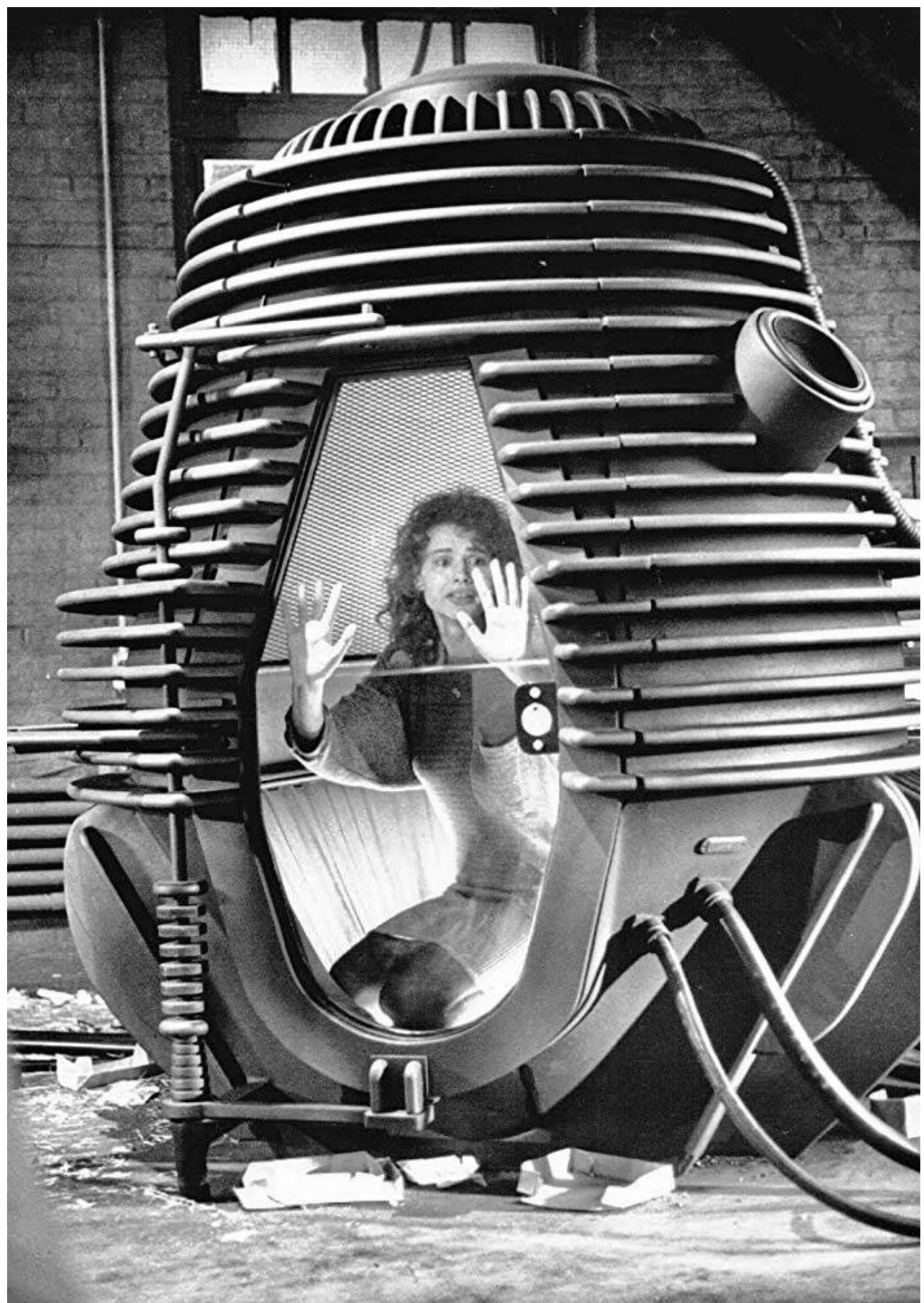
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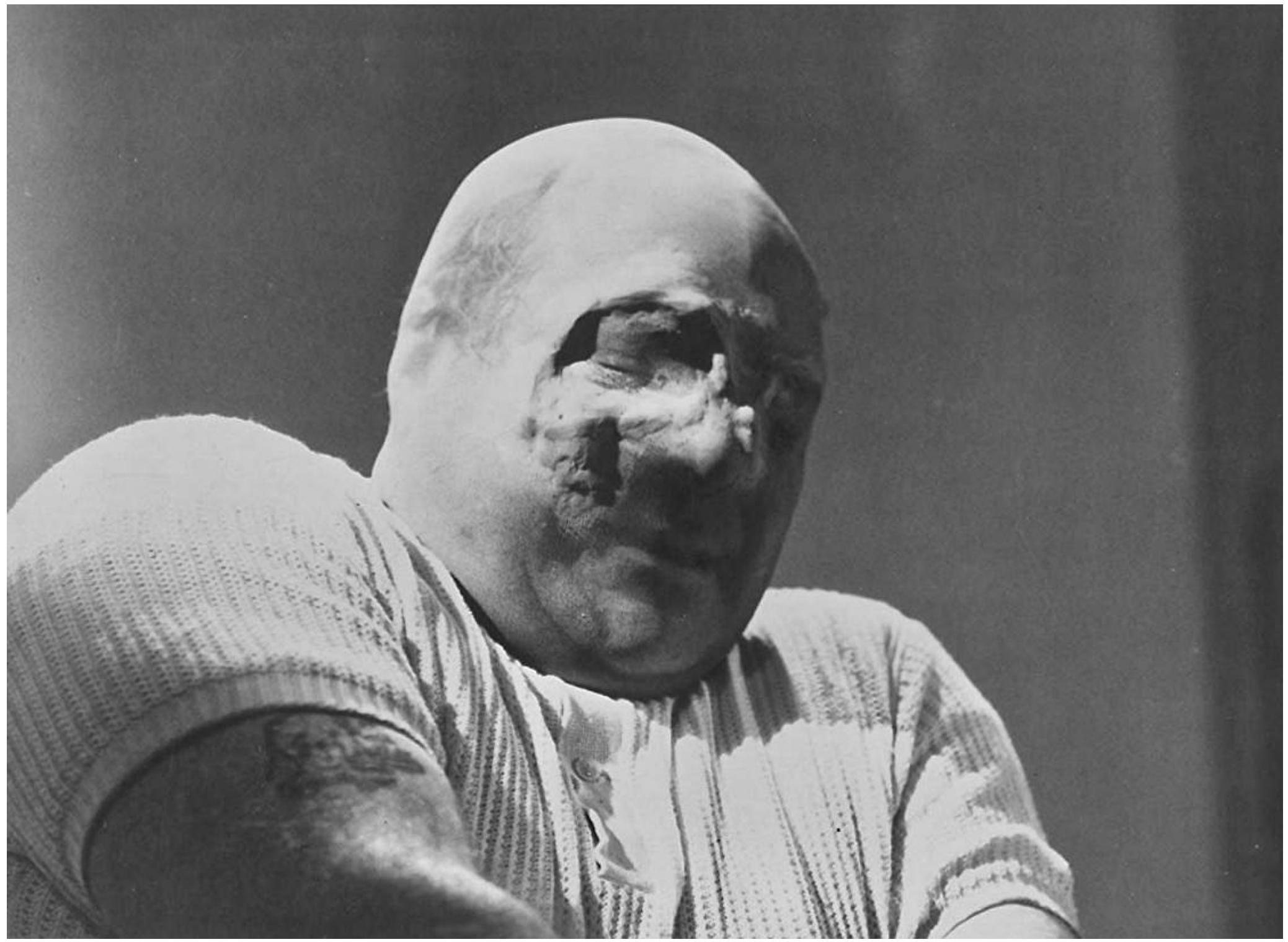


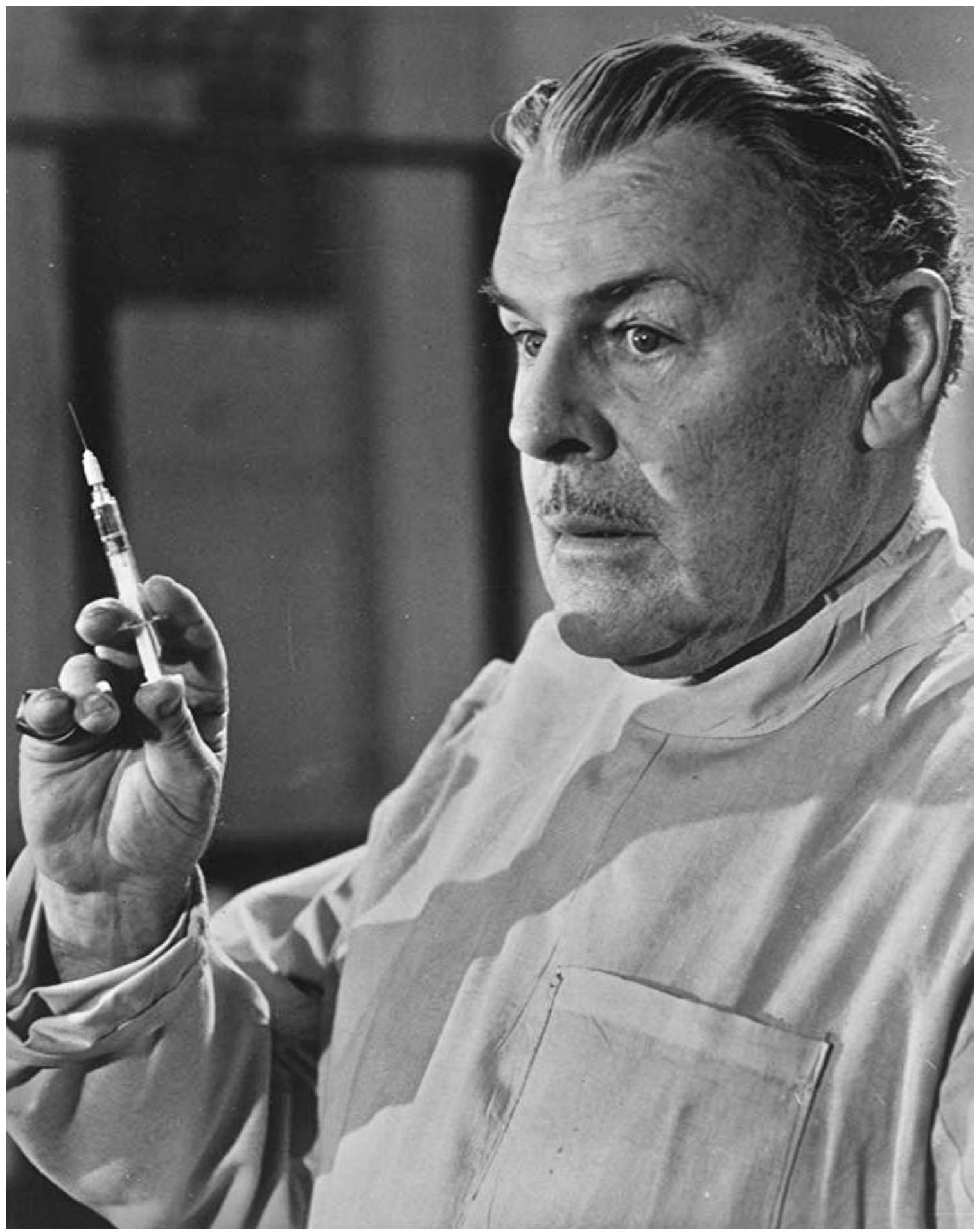
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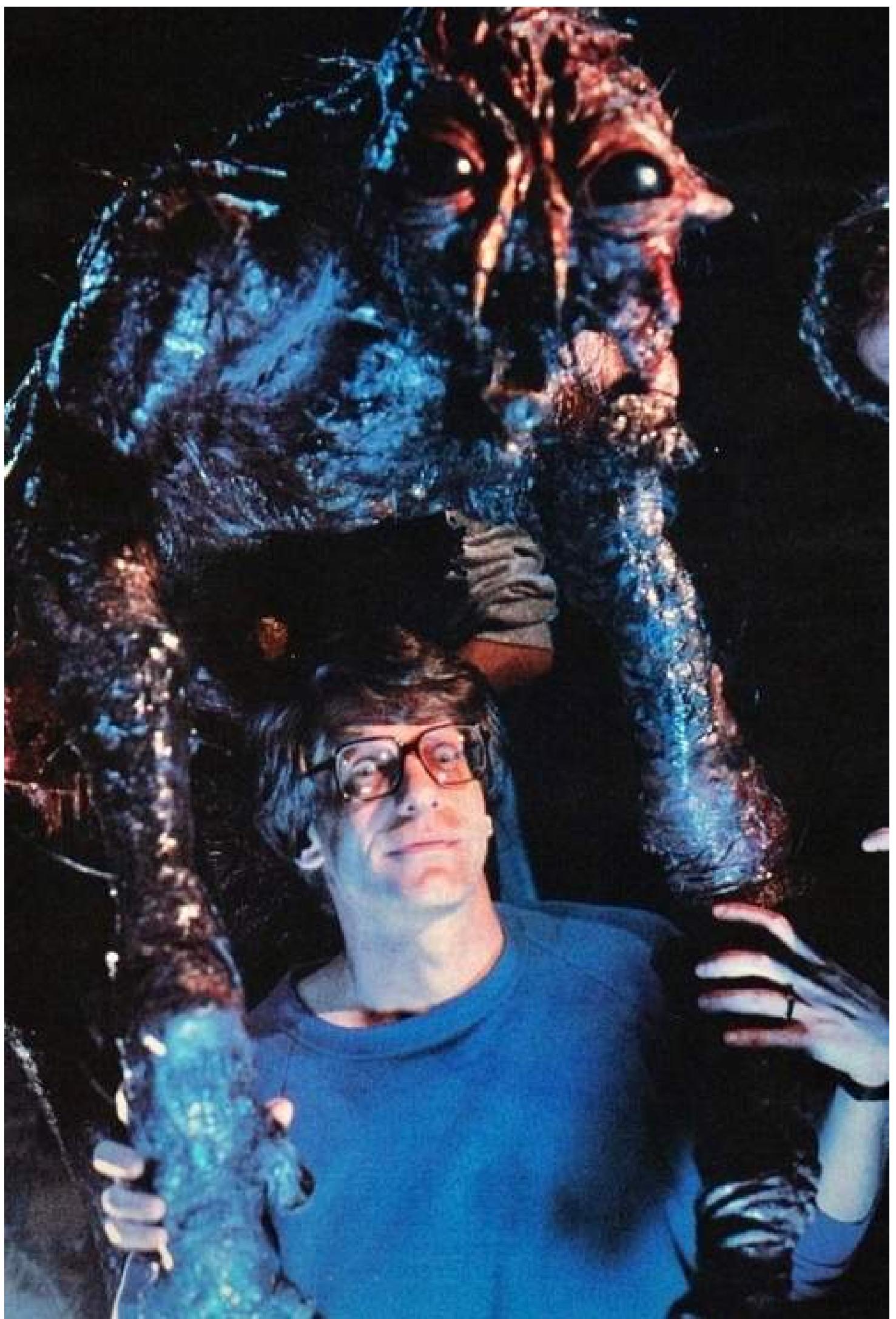
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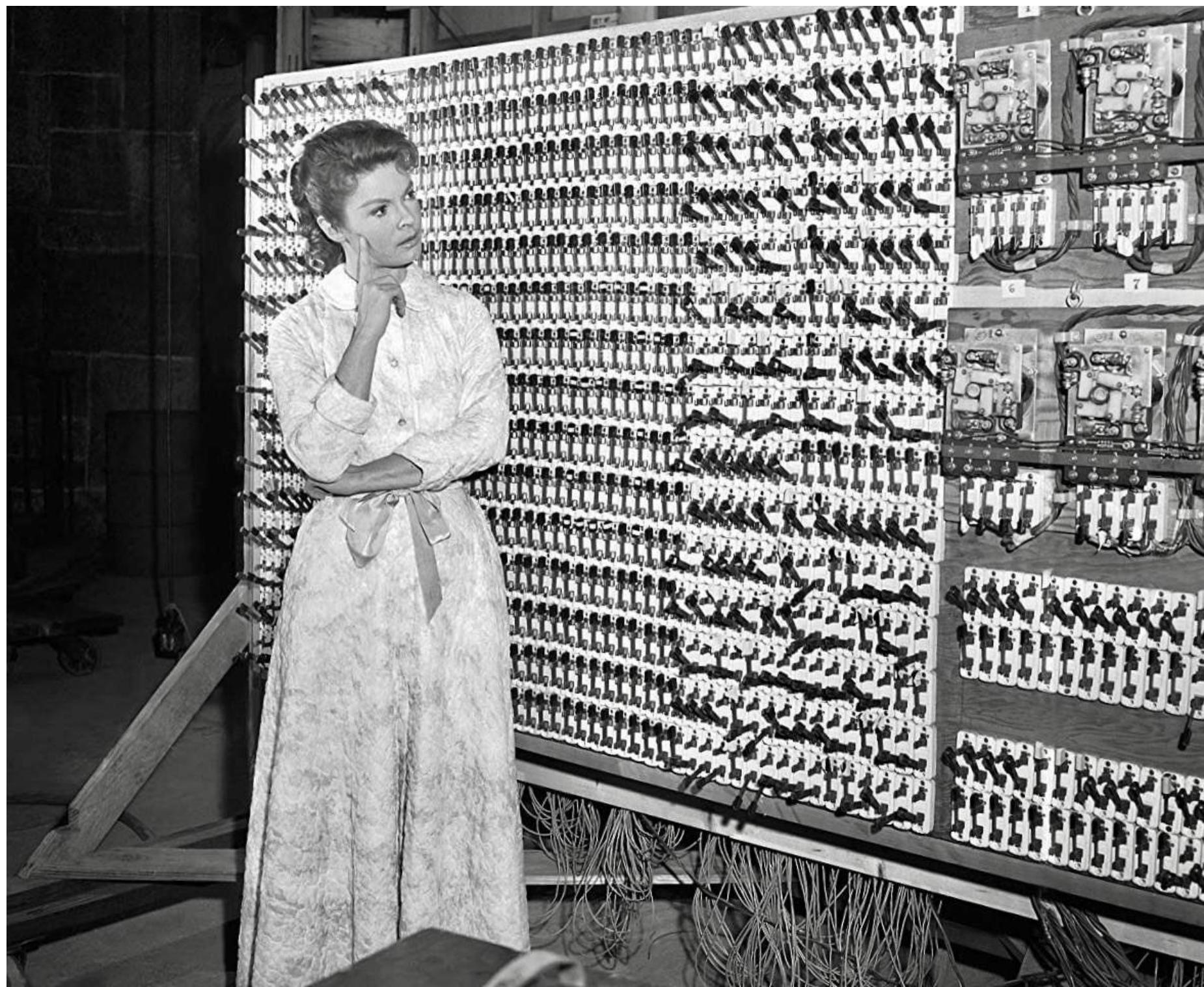






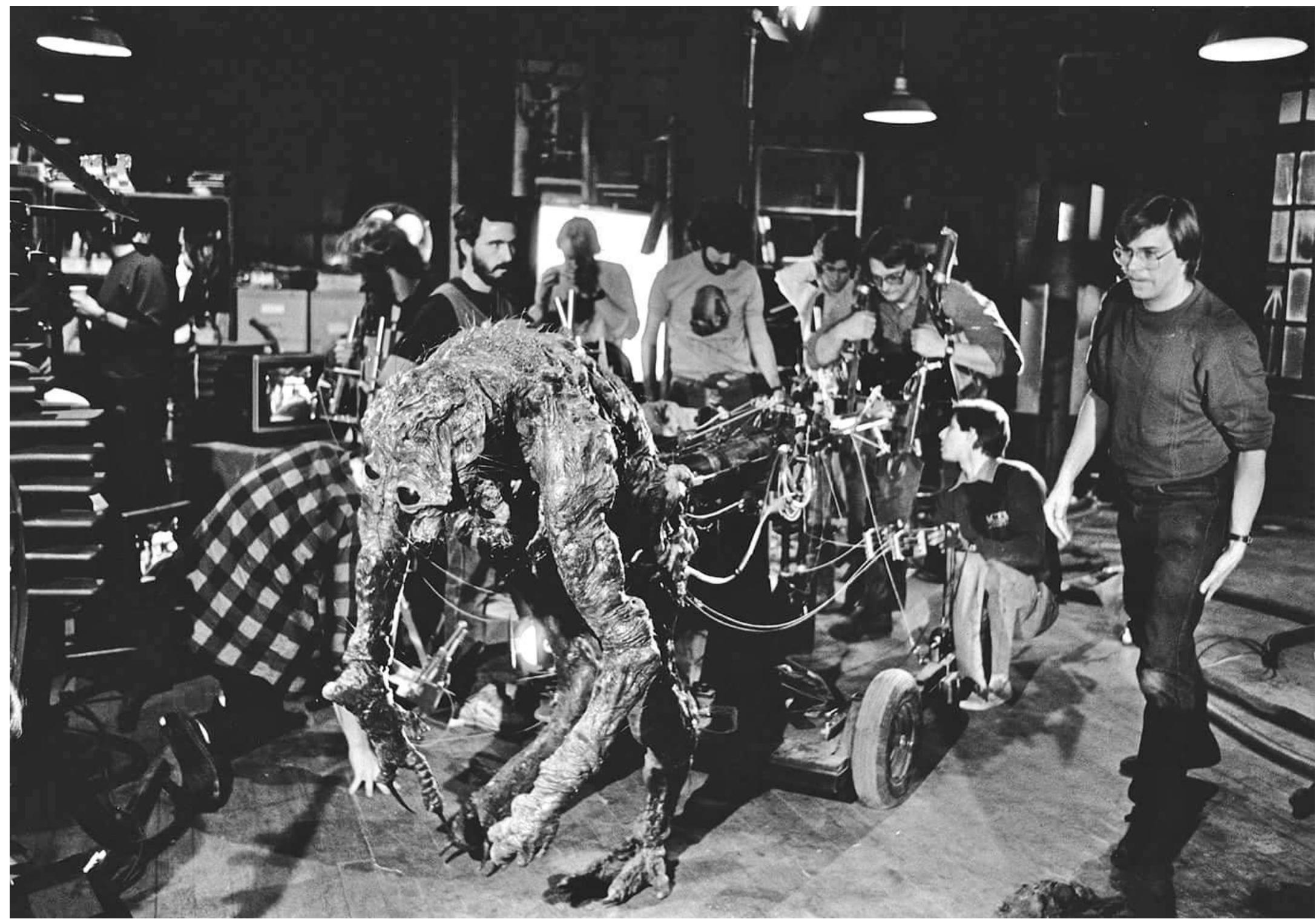
















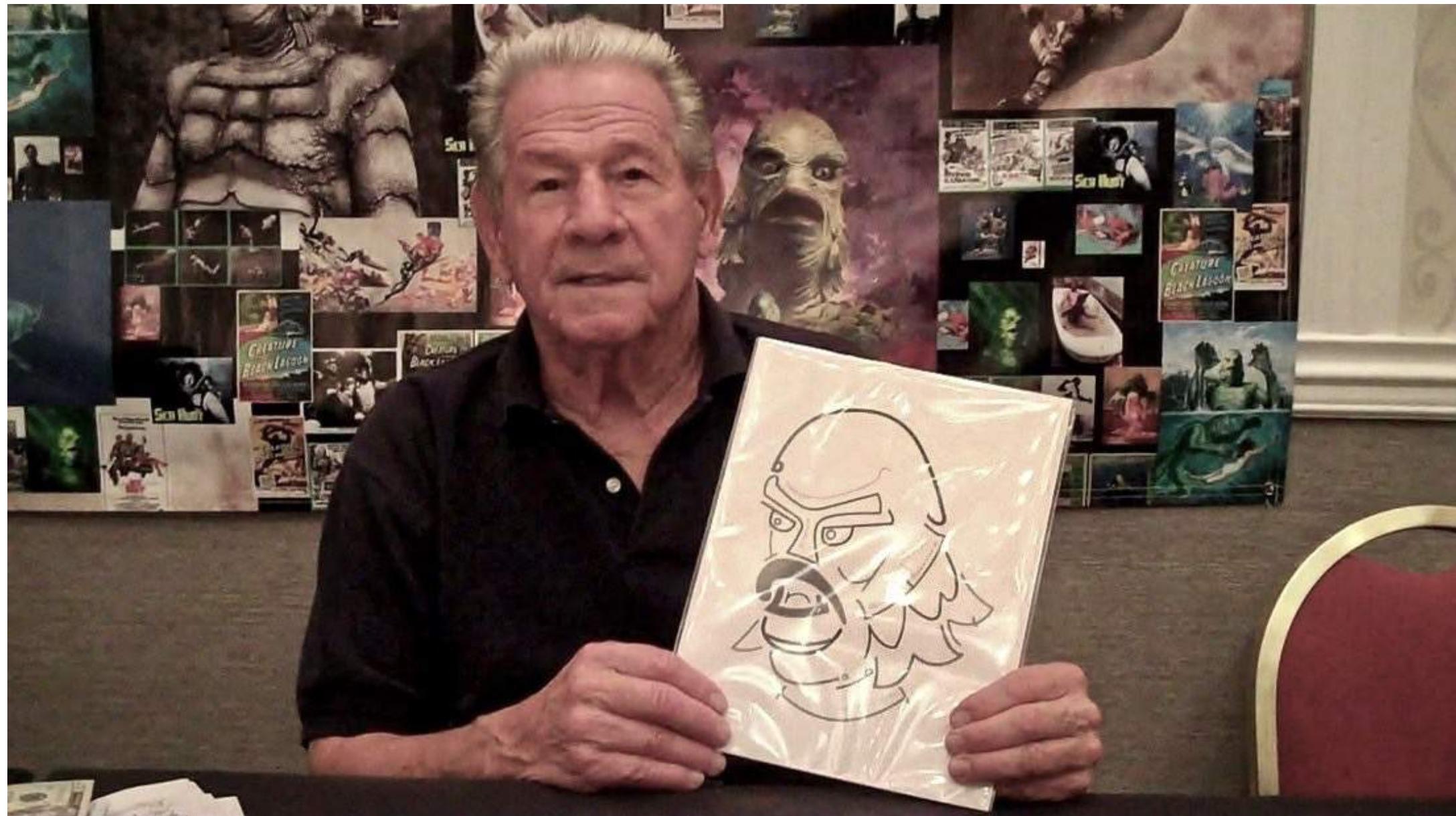




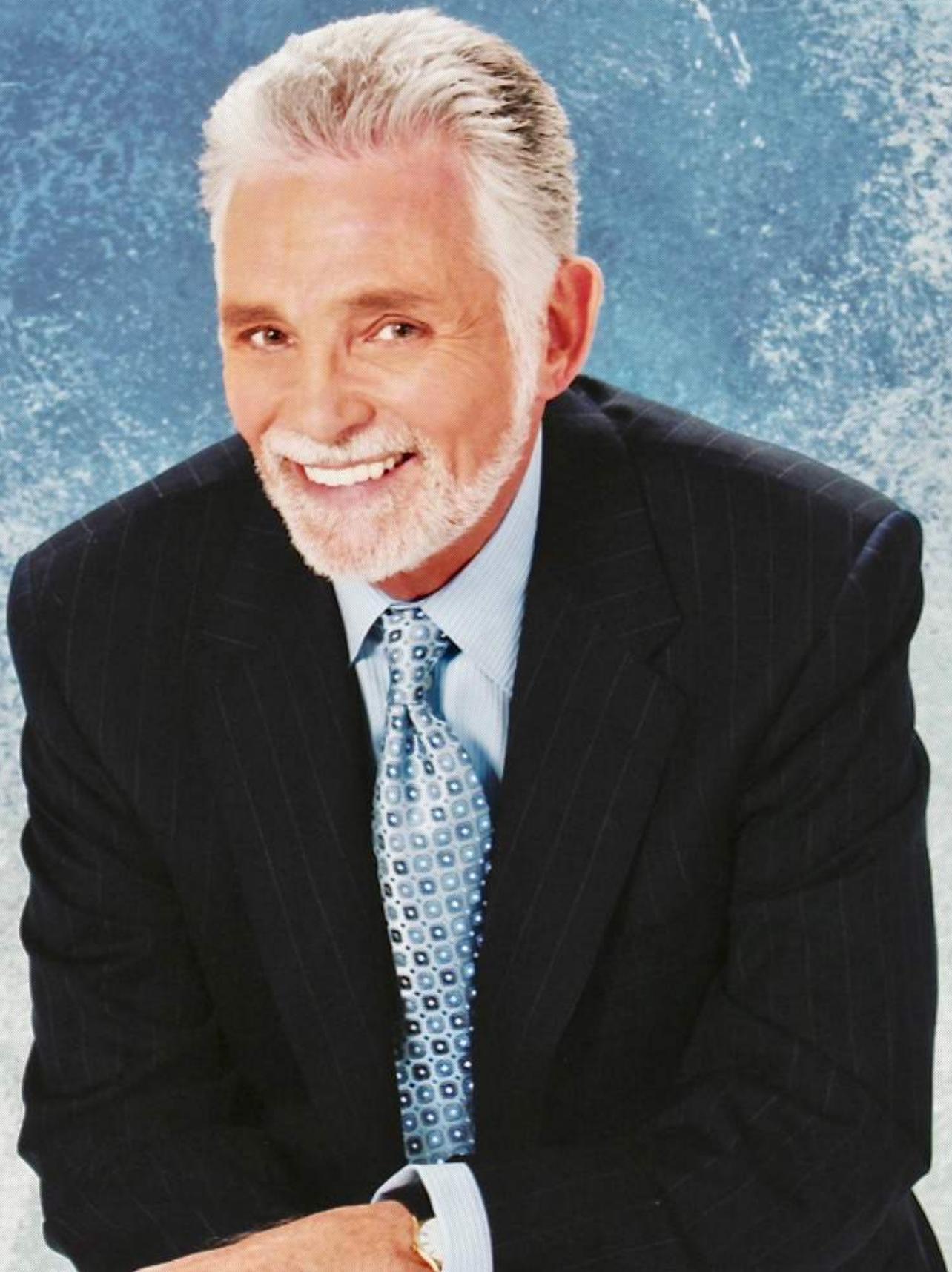
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THE HOW-TO-DO MAGAZINE

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Science Creates
a Monster
See Page 76

AMAZING MOON FARMS TO BANISH STARVATION
HOW TO BUILD A BATTERY-POWERED SCOOTER





Science Creates a *Monster*

Hollywood has produced some weird costumes
but this \$18,000 horror-suit tops them all.

By Harvey B. Jones

An ominous order rang through the studios of Universal-International pictures recently: "Gill-Man—report to the underwater tank to test your three heads!"

Accordingly a horrible monster, half man and half fish, lumbered maniacally across the lot, stopped at the huge water tank, paused for an instant and then plunged into the murky depths.

To the casual observer it might have seemed as though the studio was being attacked by a frightful sub-human creature from out of the past but the cameras and set crews, producer, directors, actors and script girls all held their ground bravely. Were they too frightened to move? Or did they all know it was a trained monster?

Plastic material is applied here to the actor to make a pliable mold of Gill-Man's head section.

But if that were the case, where had it come from in the first place?

Actually the answer to all these questions is a bit simpler, and certainly less mind-shattering than you might imagine.

The Gill-Man is an ingenious and complicated costume created after eight-and-a-half months' research by Universal-International makeup chief Bud Westmore and his staff. And the creature who lumbered around the lot dressed in this human-fish hybrid is an ex-Marine named Ben Chapman who plays the part of the Gill-Man in the new film, *Creature From The Black Lagoon*, a science-fiction thriller in 3-D.

The story deals with the search for a primitive gill-man, believed to be a living

For many of the scenes in the *Creature From The Black Lagoon*, the whole studio went under water.



Triumphant Gill-Man, in the movie script, carries Julie Adams to the crew.

After head sketches have been checked, monster is created in sections. Here feet are plastered.

Bud Westmore, left, and Chris Mueller put final touches to rear section of the monster costume.



1774-6



$3^1 \times 10^9$

$\frac{10^6}{10^6} NF$

$$KVA = (P_F \times F_{RE})$$

$$(5 \times 10^{-6} CM)^2$$

$$V_{el} = [1 - j\omega]$$

$$\frac{dy}{UR}$$

$$F_R \times \left(\frac{4}{.66}\right)$$



HIG

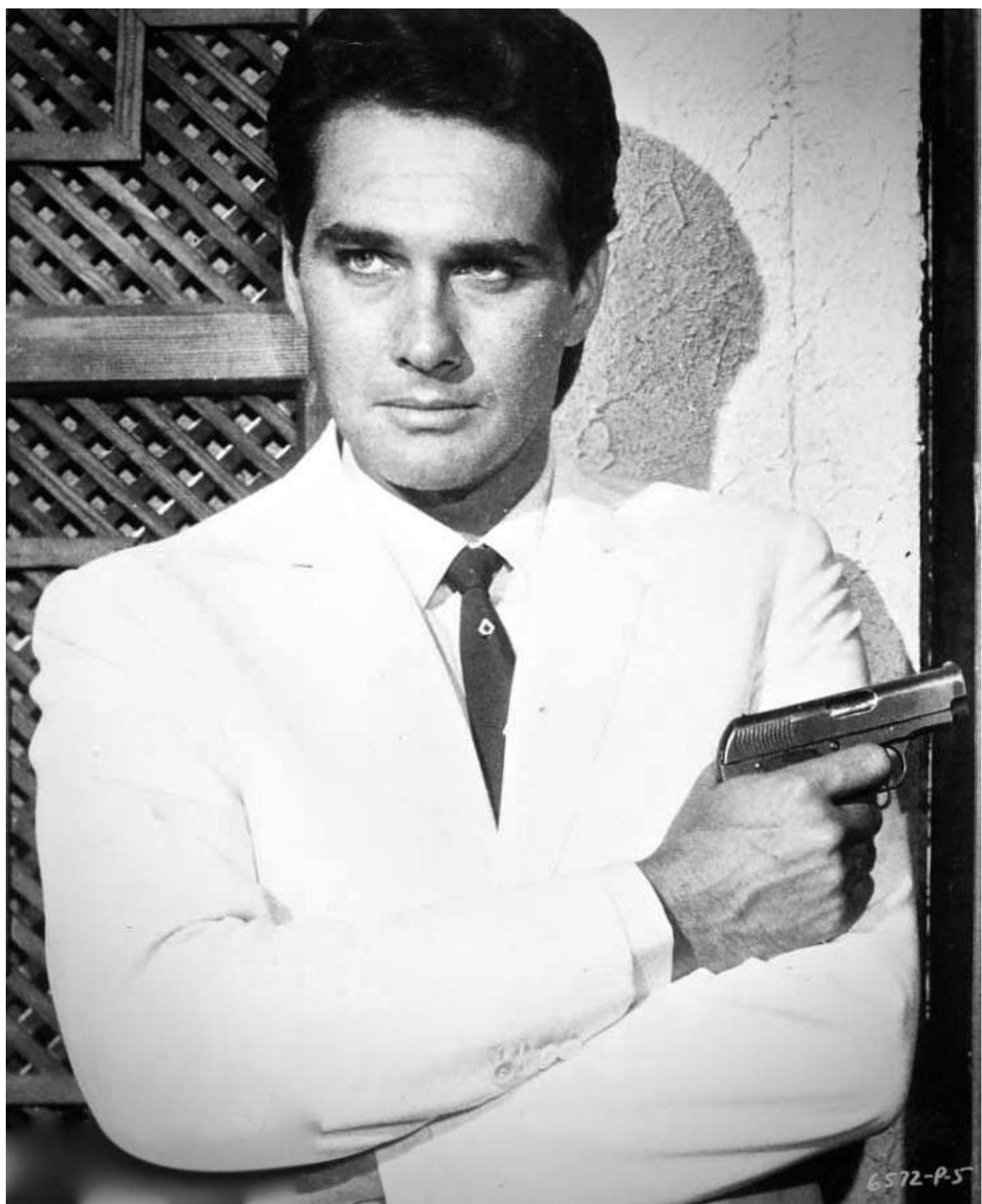












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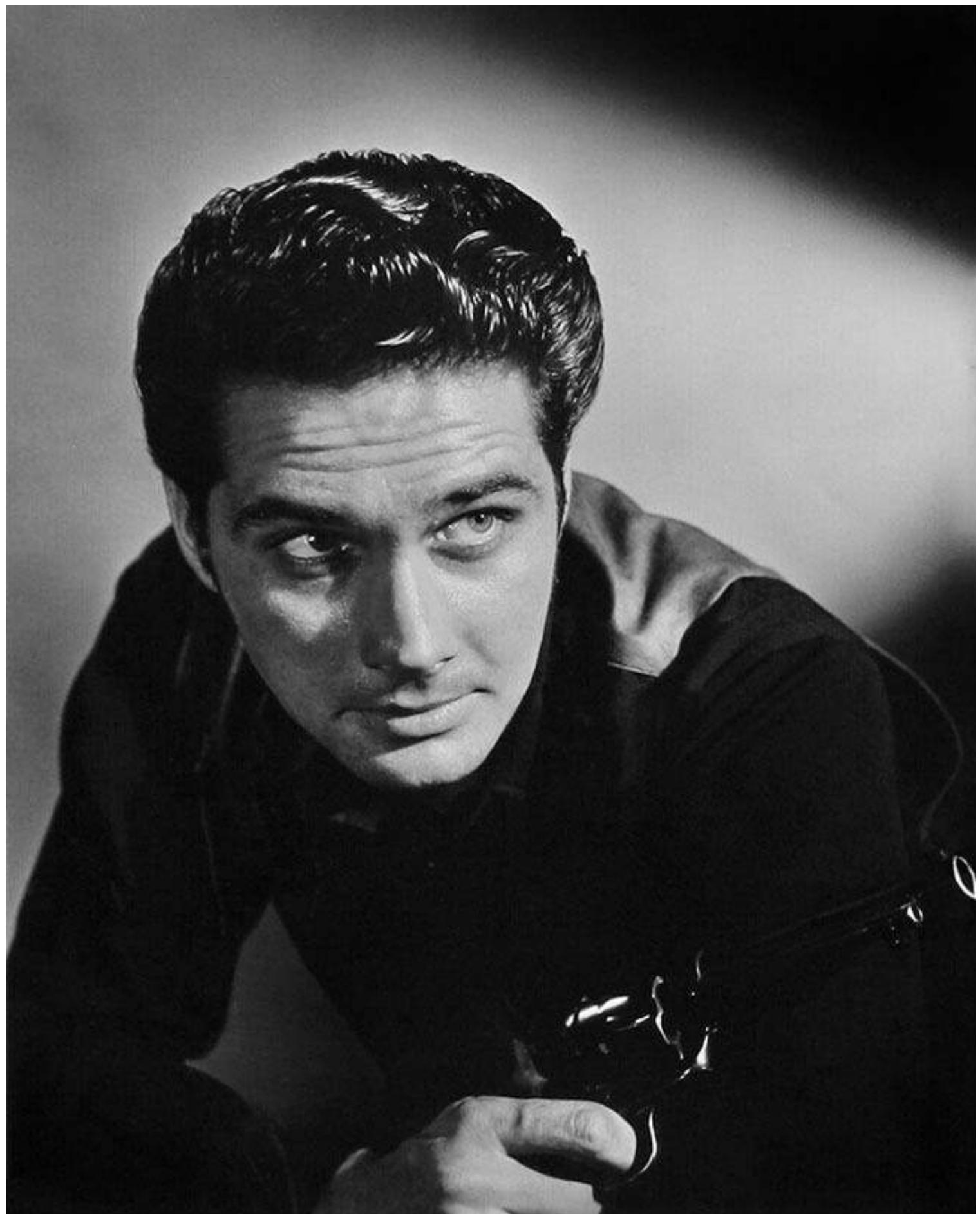




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